

# JAPANESE FAIRY TALES



WILLIAM ELLIOT GRIFFIS



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# **JAPANESE FAIRY TALES**

*BOOKS BY*  
WM. ELLIOT GRIFFIS

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Princess Fire-Fly is put in prison.



# JAPANESE FAIRY TALES

WILLIAM ELLIOT GRIFFIS



NEW YORK  
T. Y. CROWELL CO.  
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# A FOREWORD *of* DEDICATION

TO

ROBERT CLARENCE PRUYN, LL.D.

DEAR CLASSMATE :

When in our Alma Mater, "on the banks of the old Raritan," in 1865, you first told me about the soul of Japan and of her fairy and folklore, and when in 1866, the first two sons of Dai Nippon came to America to be our fellow-students in Rutgers College, I knew not that I was to be the pioneer foreign guest as educator, in a daimio's castle, in the far interior of the Land of the Gods.

There in both the City of the Happy Well, and in the capital, I heard from lords and ladies, as well as from the common people, the stories, ages old, of the pre-ancient fairy world, and the medieval folk-lore, of which Buddhism is the affluent mother.

In this year, out of the treasures of the once hermit nation, now become one of the households in the community of nations, please accept this offering of stories, new and old, and walk with me through the jeweled gates you first opened to your fellow-student. With your name and that of your honored father—the envoy of President Lincoln in the land opened to the world's brotherhood by Commodore M. C. Perry and Townsend Harris—the modern progress of Japan will ever be honorably associated.

While proving the new, may the Princess Country ever hold to what is best in the old.

Your fellow-lover of The Land of Dainty Decoration, in the bonds of friendship,

WILLIAM ELLIOT GRIFFIS,  
*Rutgers, '69.*





## “ OPEN SESAME ”

**I**N the old feudal days of Japan, a knight or gentleman riding on horseback within city limits was always preceded by a groom, who ran ahead and shouted to the people to get out of the way, warning the children at play, lifting the babies out of danger, and thus making a clear track for the rider who followed him. His bare back was tattooed with wonderful figures of heroes, dragons and the many strange creatures that dwell in fairy-land. Indeed, when I lived in Japan I was first attracted into the wonder-world of the people by studying the legends and marvels thus pictured on human skin. Thence I went to the flower shows and tableaux, by which, in living blooms and ingeniously blended colors, the florists of Nippon set forth the national lore. My studies were more advanced and my delight greater when, in the art and language, new doors were opened into the treasure chambers of “ The Country Between Heaven and Earth.”

The stories in this little volume are the direct result of what I saw and studied through these inviting doors. Some were suggested by native

custom, and artists' pictures, while others were spun from my own brain. But all of them, I feel sure, reflect the spirit of Old Japan. “The Fire-Fly's Lovers,” “The Child of the Thunder,” “Little Silver's Dream,” “Lord Cuttle-Fish's Concert,” “Lord Long-Legs' Procession,” and “The Gift of Gold Lacquer,” exist in no Japanese text. They were suggested by what I saw of the lovely, the comic, or the pompous side of life in a Daimio's Castle. Several of the others have been adapted from native legends and operas. Such old friends as “The Tongue-Cut Sparrow,” “The Ape and the Crab,” “The Two Frogs,” and “The Idol and the Whale,” are partly folk-lore, and partly of definite authorship.

As for the Japanese names and phrases, I think you will have no trouble with them, if you will remember that *a* is pronounced as in father, *ai* as in aisle, *e* as in prey, *ei* as in weigh, *o* as in bore, and *u* as in rule, or as in boot. Thus, Fukui sounds as if spelled Foo-koo-ee, Benkei as Benkay, Rai as rye, etc.

So, “*o idé nasari*” (please, honorable one, enter) as they say in Japan.

W. E. G.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. FIRE GLOW AND FIRE GLOOM - -	1
II. THE FIRE-FLY'S LOVERS - - -	13
III. A BRIDGE OF CROCODILES - -	21
IV. THE TRAVELS OF THE TWO FROGS -	30
V. THE CHILD OF THE THUNDER - -	37
VI. THE TONGUE-CUT SPARROW - -	43
VII. THE APE AND THE CRAB - - -	48
VIII. THE WONDERFUL TEA-KETTLE -	52
IX. THE LADY FROM THE SILVER MOON -	58
X. BENKÉI AND THE BELL - - -	73
XI. LITTLE SILVER'S DREAM - - -	79
XII. THE MAGIC FROG - - - -	85
XIII. THE THOUSAND-FACED JEWEL - -	95
XIV. HOW THE JELLY-FISH LOST HIS SHELL - - - - -	102
XV. LORD CUTTLE-FISH'S CONCERT - -	110
XVI. RAIKO AND HIS GUARDS - - -	118
XVII. RAIKO SLAYS THE DEMONS - -	125
XVIII. THE BOY BROUGHT UP IN THE WOODS - - - - -	135
XIX. THE AMBITIOUS CARP - - -	142
XX. LORD LONG-LEGS' PROCESSION - -	148
XXI. HOW TODA SLEW THE LONG SERPENT	157
XXII. THE POWER OF LOVE - - -	165

## CONTENTS

XXIII.	THE TIDE-JEWELS - - -	173
XXIV.	THE IDOL AND THE WHALE - -	182
XXV.	THE GRATEFUL CRANE - - -	190
XXVI.	THE SWORD THAT MOWED THE GRASS - - - - -	197
XXVII.	PRINCE YAMATO'S ADVENTURES -	203
XXVIII.	THE GIFT OF GOLD LACQUER - -	210



## ILLUSTRATIONS

Princess Fire-Fly is put in prison (page 20) *Frontispiece*

	PAGE
There lay a little boy, rosy and warm . . .	39

The spout of the kettle had turned into a badger's nose . . . . .	53
--	----

He also learned how to govern the frogs . . .	87
---	----

This was the archer's opportunity . . .	119
---	-----

Lord Long-Legs' Procession . . . .	154
------------------------------------	-----

The dragon-fishes, taking the ships' cables in their mouths, towed them forward . . .	176
--	-----

The Whale found he was two inches longer .	188
--	-----



# Japanese Fairy Tales

## I

### FIRE GLOW AND FIRE GLOOM

**W**HEN Japan was all Fairy Land and the fairies were almost as numerous as every-day people are now, there were two brothers, both of whom were sons of one mother, the Sun-goddess, who left them to rule the earth and the sea, while she went up to live and shine in the heavens and give plenty of light to the world. She named one of them, the younger, Fire Glow, and the other, the older, Fire Gloom, for their names matched their temper. Like a good mother, she gave each one something to do, to keep them busy and out of mischief. So to the younger she presented a bow and arrows and he became a hunter on the mountains. To the elder she gave a fish-hook and line and he became a fisherman.

At that time the sky and earth were so close together that the Sun-goddess could climb up on a ladder, but after she got up in the blue sky to live in the sun, the ladder, which was made of

stone, fell down and broke into many pieces. Now it lies in the sea, in southern Japan, but the waves have broken off so much that the rocks that are left stick up out of the water like rungs on a ladder.

The young hunter went off to the mountains and quickly won success. He brought home much game, deer, wild goats, rabbits, pheasants and many other fat birds, so that his servants and retainers had plenty to eat.

But alas for the poor fisherman! He cast his hook and line in the water, sat down and waited long, tried often, but caught nothing. He came home wet and hungry. His people grumbled and pulled their girdles tighter around their empty stomachs, to forget their hunger.

The two brothers talked over the matter and then agreed to change places, to improve their luck. The fisherman took the bow and arrows and went off hunting. The hunter took the hook and line and sat down on a rock by the sea to catch fish.

But nothing happened. The hunter chased beasts and shot at birds, but got no game, while the fisherman saw fish swimming but could catch none.

Worse to tell, while the younger brother had his line and cork bobbing in the water, a big, strong red fish called the Tai, came, looked at the



bait, snapped at it and swallowed it. Then it swam away with both line and hook in its mouth.

The other brother came back empty handed from the hunt and in a bad humor, because he had spent all his arrows and got nothing. When he found that his hook and line were lost, he burst out in a fit of anger and spoke hard words.

“Be patient, brother,” said the younger to the elder. “I’ll hunt everywhere for the hook and surely I shall find it, or else make new ones for you.”

The older brother said nothing, but left him in an angry mood.

What should the younger brother do now?

He unbuckled his sword from his belt and went to the sword-maker and said:

“Make me five hundred fish-hooks of the best sort.” And this was done; for the sword was of the finest steel edge with a tough iron backing, and the man who forged blades was very skilful.

Then he took the five hundred fish-hooks, all sharp and barbed, in a basket, and laying them on a ceremonial tray, begged his brother to accept of them in place of the lost hook.

But his brother was still angry and turned his face away and would not look at the fish-hooks.

“Take them away! Thousands of what you can make would not satisfy me. Don’t come near me, till you find and bring back my hook.”

Now the real truth was that the older brother, Prince Fire Gloom, hated the younger one, Prince Fire Glow, because he was the ruler of the Fairy Land of Japan, according to the order of the Sun-goddess; because their mother had chosen him to be such. The bad-tempered fellow wanted to be ruler himself, which is the reason why he behaved so shamefully toward his younger brother.

So down to the seashore with his basket of fish-hooks the younger brother went and sat down on a rock by the beach. He was very low in his mind and wondered what he could do to make his brother love him again, for in Japan the younger must always obey the elder brother.

While sitting so dejected on the beach, he saw an old man walking toward him. It was the fairy named Lord Shiwo, who had charge of the tides, high tide and low tide, ebb and flood. He spoke kindly to the young man and asked how he could help him.

Prince Fire Glow told him the story of his troubles, how he lost the fish-hook and line and how angry his brother was, so that he dared not face him till he had found the lost fishing tackle.

“Well, you’ll never find the hook here, even if you spend your lifetime hunting for it,” said Shiwo. “It is either at the bottom of the sea, or in the mouth of some fish.”

“ Oh, oh! ” cried Prince Fire Glow. “ What can I do? Help me! ” he pleaded.

“ Be at peace, my lad. I’ll make you a basket boat of bamboo and pitch and then you can go down into the Palace of the Dragon King of the World Under the Sea. Tell him your story, and that I sent you. Then he will call all the fishes, great and small, before him, and his servant Dr. Cuttlefish will find the hook for you.”

So setting at once to work, the old fairy made for Prince Fire Glow a basket that was waterproof and that would sail of itself over the seas.

Far, far away over the seas went Prince Fire Glow, until he came in sight of a wonderful palace. The columns of the gates were of shining pink coral. The walls, turrets and towers were studded with precious stones without number and of many colors. Large and beautiful trees overshadowed the space before the gates and in one part there was a well. It was full of pure water, which seemed on the top as level as the face of a mirror.

So now he knew he was at Fukui, the City of the Happy Well, in the realm of the Dragon King.

But the gate was fast shut and though he knocked lustily and listened long, no one answered his call. So, not knowing what was to come, he climbed up into one of the thick cassia



trees that hung over the well and waited. He had heard of the terrible dragons that served the King and obeyed all the royal commands. What if one of these monsters were to come out and devour him as an intruder?

But instead of frightful dragons, what was his surprise to see the jeweled gates swing open and out stepped two lovely princesses in splendid robes! One carried a crystal vase and the other a pail of pure gold. Both wore splendid clothes, enriched with shining gems.

When they came to the well to draw water, what was their surprise to see a face reflected in the surface of the clear water of the well. Neither of these fairy maidens, daughters of the Dragon King of the World Under the Sea had ever beheld either a mortal or a fairy man from the earth. So at first they were frightened. Yet they thought the face was very, very lovely.

Their curiosity was so great, however, that they threw away their fears and glanced up into the tree. Timid as they were, they enjoyed the sight, for Prince Fire Glow had great manly beauty. Yet they were so dazed with wonder, that neither of the fairy maidens could speak a word.

But Prince Fire Glow at once saved them all further trouble, by leaping down from the tree, and at once saying:



“ I am a messenger from Shiwo, the fairy King of the Tides, and the palace gates being shut, and not being able to open them, I climbed the tree and waited, thirsty as I was, till some one came. Give me a drink, I pray you.”

Still not speaking, but charmed by his grave and fine manners, the jewel maidens stepped to the well and drawing up water with the golden pail, one of them poured out some in a crystal cup and handed it politely to the Prince.

Like a true Japanese fairy, Prince Fire Glow took the cup in both hands and first, before touching it to his lips, lifted it up to his forehead. This was the polite way, in token of reverence to the giver. Then he drank and having quenched his thirst set down the cup on the well curb.

While the maidens were wondering what their visitor would do next, they saw him draw his short sword—for all Japanese princes wore two of these weapons—and with this he cut off from his necklace one of the curved jewels such as princes wore. Then, dropping it into the cup, he handed both back to the elder of the two lovely fairy maidens. Her name was Tayo, which means Jewel of the first water.

Then the maidens knew that their guest was of lordly birth. They began talking freely together and Prince Fire Glow found that these were the daughters of the Dragon King and they learned

that he was a descendant of her Heavenly Majesty, the Sun-goddess.

He told them the story of his trouble with his brother, of the lost fish-hook, and how the old King of the Tides had helped him to get to their father's place in the curious bamboo boat. He asked if they would take him to their father and help him in his quest.

They seemed only too delighted and promised to do all they could to help him.

Then the elder, the Jewel Princess, left him with her younger sister and ran quickly to her father's palace, telling her adventure and how she had seen a being, such as she had never gazed on before, and who was amazingly beautiful. He was coming to see the King and her younger sister was bringing him.

"From all you tell me," said her father, "he must be a son of the Sun-goddess, and we must welcome and treat him handsomely. We shall provide a feast, and I shall expect you and your sister to make music and dance for us."

The Jewel Princess was only too glad to promise and they had scarcely finished talking when her sister and Prince Fire Glow entered. They talked together for hours. Then the King clapped his hands, and in walked a procession of curious creatures that seemed to have been selected from all the fishes known in river,

lake, or sea. They were all attired in splendid robes. They walked on their tails and held in their fins every sort of delicious thing to eat.

After the banquet, there was music by the palace band and dancing by the two lovely princesses. Added to this was the fun-making by the cuttlefish, for he was both the funny fellow and the doctor of the company. He performed all kinds of antics and tricks to amuse them all.

So happy was the Prince that time passed away quickly before he knew it. Three years were thus spent, before he became homesick and remembered what he had come for.

When he told the Dragon King about the fish-hook, His Majesty called Dr. Cuttlefish and told him to summon all the creatures of the sea. All came quickly, except the Tai, but not one had a swelled mouth. Then Dr. Cuttlefish at once guessed that she was the sinner. So he ran off on his eight legs and in a few minutes brought her before the King.

Her swelled throat and big mouth told the story.

Dr. Cuttlefish put in a pair of tongs, drew out the hook, and having cleansed it, presented it with many bows and apologies to Prince Fire Glow. As the Tai had already suffered so long with a



sore throat, the Prince asked the King not to punish her. So she was set free.

When Prince Fire Glow asked of the King permission to go home and visit the earth again, His Majesty clapped his hands and called for one of his big crocodiles, that was to carry his guest back to earth. At once one of these long animals appeared all saddled and bridled for the journey.

Before he left, the King called to his daughter to bring to him the twin jewels which controlled the tides. Forthwith she came forward holding in a shining shell, two globes of crystal that flashed out rays of light, almost like fire.

“This,” said the King, “is the Jewel of the Flowing Tide. Cast it down and the sea will come rolling in like a flood. And this,” added he, taking up the other, “is the Jewel of the Ebbing Tide. Throw it into the sea and the tide will recede and leave the shore bare. They may help you in time of trouble. Good fortune attend your voyage. Fare thee well.”

Prince Fire Glow thanked His Majesty and prepared to mount the crocodile's back. Sorrowfully the Princess said good-bye and then turned and wept.

Prince Fire Glow got on the crocodile's back, held on tight to the bridles and swiftly rode over thousands of miles. He landed at the place



## FIRE GLOW AND FIRE GLOOM 11

where he had left Shiwo, the Fairy Lord of the Tides, three years before.

Meanwhile, on earth, his wicked brother Prince Fire Gloom had become ruler of the realm and was very cruel to his people. When Prince Fire Glow stood before him, he was surprised and angry, for he hoped his brother was dead. He resolved to get rid of him.

One day when walking on a hill above the rice-fields, his brother Prince Fire Gloom came near with a dagger in his hand, and would have killed his younger brother, but Prince Fire Glow saw him coming and at once took out from his girdle the Jewel of the Flowing Tide, and threw it out into the sea. In an instant, the waves came rolling and surging in. Both sight and the sound were terrible.

Then it was amazing to see the antics of the once proud, but now frightened Prince Fire Gloom. Terrified, he jumped from hillock to hillock, to escape being drowned, sometimes almost turning a somersault, but although he climbed up a tree the waves caught him. He rolled over and over until, at the bottom of the hill, wet and well-soused, he crawled toward his brother and begged his life. He asked forgiveness from Prince Fire Glow and promised to obey him. "I will be your slave if you'll spare my life," said he.

Now Prince Fire Glow had no malice in his heart toward his brother. So, taking out from his girdle the other crystal jewel, he threw it down and back went the waters, the waves leaping and dancing to the sea again.

After this Prince Fire Glow ruled the land, to which came great peace and prosperity. He married the princess Many-Rayed Jewel, the Dragon King's daughter, and they lived happily ever after. From this pair sprang the line of Mikados or Emperors of Everlasting Great Japan, that have ruled the Land of the Cherry Blossoms for over two thousand five hundred years.

Long afterward, the Story Teller lived in the City of the Happy Well and there this story was first told him. For hundreds of years, merry-makers, called Quick Men, gave exhibitions of the antics, the gestures, and the tricks of Prince Fire Gloom, as he tried to escape being drowned when the sea rolled in. Then, later in the Great Eastern capital, Tokyo, he saw the Imperial Band of the Mikado's musicians from the palace, in their splendid dresses of gold and silver, in the No, or opera, with their music and dances, tell again, in acts and pose, in song and word, the wonderful fairy stories, like those of Prince Fire Glow and Prince Fire Gloom.

## II

### THE FIRE-FLY'S LOVERS

**O**N the southern and sunny side of the castle moats of the Fukui castle, in Echizen, the water had long ago become shallow so that lotus lilies grew luxuriantly. Deep in the heart of one of the great flowers whose petals were as pink as the lining of a sea-shell, lived the King of the Fire-Flies, Hi-ō, whose only daughter was the lovely Princess Ho-tá-ru. While still a child the Princess had been carefully kept at home within the pink petals of the lily, never going even to the edges except to see her father fly off on his journey. Dutifully she waited until of age, when the fire glowed in her own body, and shone, beautifully illuminating the lotus, until its light gleamed like a lamp within a globe of coral.

Every night her light grew brighter and brighter, until at last it was as mellow as gold. Then her father said:

“My daughter is now of age, she may fly abroad with me sometimes, and when the proper suitor comes she may marry whom she will.”



So Hotaru flew forth in and out among the lotus lilies of the moat, then into rich rice-fields, and at last far off to the indigo meadows.

Wherever she went a crowd of suitors followed her, for she had the singular power of attracting all the night-flying insects to herself. But she cared for none of their attentions, and though she spoke politely to them all she gave encouragement to none. Yet some of the sheeny-winged gallants called her a coquette.

One night she said to her mother, the Queen:

“I have met many admirers, but I do not wish a husband from any of them. To-night I shall stay at home, and if any of them love me truly they will come and pay me court here. Then I shall lay an impossible duty on them. If they are wise they will not try to perform it; but if they love their lives more than they love me, I do not want any of them. Whoever succeeds may have me for his bride.”

“As you will, my child,” said the Queen-mother, who arrayed her daughter in her most resplendent robes, and set her on her throne in the heart of the lotus.

Then she gave orders to her body-guard to keep all suitors at a respectful distance lest some stupid gallant, a Horn-bug or a Cockchafer dazzled by the light, should approach too near and hurt the Princess or shake her throne.



No sooner had twilight faded away, than forth came the Golden Beetle, who stood on a stamen and making obeisance, said:

“ I am Lord Green-Gold. I offer my house, my fortune, and my love to Princess Hotaru.”

“ Go and bring me fire and I will be your bride,” said Hotaru.

With a bow of the head the beetle opened his wings and departed with a stately whirr.

Next came a shining bug with wings and body as black as lamp-smoke, who solemnly professed his passion. He received the same answer:

“ Bring me fire, and you may have me for your wife.”

Off flew the bug with a buzz.

Pretty soon came the scarlet Dragon-Fly, expecting so to dazzle the Princess by his gorgeous colors that she would accept him at once.

“ I decline your offer,” said the Princess, “ unless you bring me a flash of fire.”

Swift was the flight of the Dragon-Fly on his errand, and in came the Beetle with a tremendous buzz, and ardently pleaded his suit.

“ I will say ‘ yes ’ if you bring me fire,” said the glittering Princess.

Suitor after suitor appeared to woo the daughter of the King of the Fire-Flies until every petal was dotted with them. One after another in a long troop they appeared. Each in his own way,

proudly, humbly, boldly, mildly, with flattery, with boasting, even with tears, proffered his love, told his rank or expatiated on his fortune or vowed his constancy, sang his tune or played his music. To every one of her lovers the Princess in modest voice returned the same answer:

“Bring me fire, and I’ll be your bride.”

So without telling his rivals, each one thinking he had the secret alone sped away after fire.

But none ever came back to wed the Princess. Alas for the poor suitors! The Beetle whizzed off to a house near by through the paper windows of which light glimmered. So full was he of his passion that thinking nothing of wood or iron, he dashed his head against a nail, and fell dead on the ground.

The black bug flew into a room where a poor student was reading. His lamp was only a dish of earthenware full of rape seed oil with a wick made of pith. Knowing nothing of oil the love-lorn bug crawled into the dish to reach the flame and in a few seconds was drowned as in a sea.

“What’s that?” said a thrifty housewife, sitting with needle in hand, as her lamp flared up for a moment, smoking the chimney, and then cracking it; while picking out the scorched bits she found a roasted Dragon-Fly, whose scarlet wings were all burned off.

Mad with love the brilliant Hawk-Moth, afraid

of the flame yet determined to win the fire for the Princess, hovered round and round the candle flame, coming nearer and nearer each time. "Now or never, the Princess or death," he buzzed, as he darted forward to snatch a flash of flame, but singeing his wings, he fell helplessly down, and died in agony.

"What a fool he was, to be sure," said the ugly Clothes-Moth, coming on the spot. "I'll get the fire. I'll crawl up *inside* the candle." So he climbed up the hollow paper wick, and was nearly to the top, and close to the blue part of the flame, when the man, snuffing the wick, crushed him to death.

Sad indeed was the fate of the lovers of Hi-ō's daughter. Some hovered around the beacons on the headland, some fluttered about the great wax candles which stood eight feet high in their brass sockets in the temples of Buddha; some burned their noses at the top of incense sticks, or were nearly choked by the smoke; some danced all night around the lanterns in the shrines; some sought the sepulchral lamps in the graveyards; one visited the cremation furnace; another the kitchen, where a feast was going on; another chased the sparks that flew out of the chimney; but none brought fire to the Princess, or won the lover's prize. Many lost their feelers, had their shining bodies scorched or their wings singed, but



most of them alas! lay dead, black and cold next morning.

As the priests trimmed the lamps in the shrines, and the servant maids the lanterns, each said alike:

“The Princess Hotaru must have had many lovers last night.”

Alas! alas! poor suitors. Some tried to snatch a streak of green fire from the cat's eyes, and were snapped up for their pains. One attempted to get a mouthful of bird's breath, but was swallowed alive. A Carrion-Beetle (the ugly lover) crawled off to the seashore, and found some fish scales that emitted light. The Stag-Beetle climbed a mountain, and in a rotten tree stump found some bits of glowing wood like fire, but the distance was so great that long before they reached the castle moat it was daylight, and the fire had gone out; so they threw their fish scales and old wood away.

The next day was one of great mourning, and there were so many funerals going on that Himarō the Prince of the Fire-Flies on the north side of the castle moat inquired of his servants the cause. Then he learned for the first time of the glittering Princess.

Upon this the Prince, who had just succeeded his father upon the throne, fell in love with the Princess and resolved to marry her. He sent



his chamberlain to ask of her father his daughter in marriage according to true etiquette. The father agreed to the Prince's proposal, with the condition that the Prince should obey her behest in one thing, which was to come in person bringing her fire.

Then the Prince at the head of his glittering battalions came in person and filled the lotus palace with a flood of golden light. But Hotaru was so beautiful that her charms paled not their fire even in the blaze of the Prince's glory. The visit ended in wooing, and the wooing in wedding. On the night appointed, in a palanquin made of the white lotus-petals, amid the blazing torches of the Prince's battalions of warriors, Hotaru was borne to the Prince's palace, and there Prince and Princess were joined in wedlock.

Many generations have passed since Hi-marō and Hotaru were married, and still it is the whim of all Fire-Fly princesses that their base-born lovers must bring fire as their love-offering or lose their prize. Else would the glittering fair ones be wearied unto death by the importunity of their lovers. Great indeed is the loss, for in this quest of fire many thousand insects, attracted by the Fire-Fly, are burned to death in the vain hope of winning the fire that shall gain the cruel but beautiful one that fascinates them. It is for this cause that each night insects hover around the

lamp flame, and every morning a crowd of victims drowned in the oil, or scorched in the flame, must be cleaned from the lamp. This is the reason why young ladies catch and imprison the Fire-Flies to watch the war of insect-love, in the hope that they may have human lovers who will dare as much, through fire and flood, as they.

### III

## A BRIDGE OF CROCODILES

**I**N old days there was a young and lively hare that lived on a hill in Japan. She was very proud of her white fur, but she was not satisfied to live with the other hares. She wanted to be a traveler and know what was in the world. She was tired of seeing nothing but the same bamboo stalks and tea plants, the same monkeys and weasels. She would like to find what other creatures there were. The grass and flowers were no different from what her granddaddy had looked at, and besides her wish was to see other creatures besides brothers and sisters and uncles and aunts, cousins and neighbors in the hare family.

Now this white hare lived on a little island which somebody long ago, for a joke, had called Oki, which is pronounced O-kee, and means Big or Great Island. From it she could see the mainland, lying off in the distant blue, and she was curious to know what was there.

So one day, hopping and jumping from the hill to the seashore, she looked over to the main-



land. There the high blue hills rose up toward the sky, as if to beckon her to come on. So standing up on her hind legs, she wiggled her front paws and rubbed them together in delight at the grand sight. No hare was ever happier than she was then.

“ Oh! how can I get to that lovely land over there! ”

Then she rubbed her fore-paws over her nose, like puss, when she washes her face. She was trying to think out a way to get across.

Just then a big crocodile stuck its nose out of the water and began to swim and frolic near by, all the time blinking its left eye at her.

“ What good luck! ” said Miss Hare to herself. “ I’ll ride on the crocodile’s back and cross over. It will be better than a boat.”

But what if the crocodile wouldn’t agree to it? What then?

Now on his part, the crocodile was very lonely and wanted company. He had swum out hoping to meet with some pleasant adventure, and was then just in the mood for something new. And here was a pretty, white-furred hare. What good luck!

Now Miss Hare did not know what Mr. Crocodile might do, whether he would swallow her up in his big mouth or carry her on his back. She wondered why crocodiles have such long

jaws. She decided first to try a trick. Proud of her snowy fur, she would show her white coat and wink at the crocodile with her bright eyes.

So she called out to the crocodile, "It's a lovely day and fine weather, isn't it, Mr. Crocodile?"

Now the crocodile was in a very frisky mood. So he answered, "Did some one speak to me? Was it you, Miss Hare? You do look lovely, but lonely too." Then he tried to smile and appear at his best.

"Oh no, not very lonely," answered Miss Hare, "but I should love to have you crawl ashore and talk to me."

Upon this, the big, clumsy crocodile crawled up from the water and grunted out, "Good-morning, Miss Hare, glad to see you," and then they had a nice talk together for several hours. Finally she said:

"Excuse me, Mr. Crocodile. I have many hares in my company and I am Queen of them all—more hares than crocodiles surely, I think. How about it?"

Now the crocodile was as proud as a king and he at once replied:

"Oh no, there are thousands more in my kingdom than in yours. You live on a little island, but my home is in the vast ocean, which washes the shores of the great countries of the world.

Were all the crocodiles, even in this one sea of Japan, brought together, and set even side by side, they would make a bridge that would stretch over to the mainland, so that you could skip across in a few minutes."

This was just what the cunning hare wanted, but she pretended not to believe what the crocodile said. Yet to make certain, she dared the crocodile to try it.

"I believe you're only boasting," said she. "At any rate, I'd like to count how many you can bring here."

Now the crocodile, in spite of his being many yardsticks long, was a stupid fellow, and had only a spoonful of brains in his warty head. Never for a moment suspecting a trick, he swam off and in a few hours returned with hundreds of his crocodile companions.

"There," said he, proudly, "just look, Miss Hare. Why! I have enough of my fellows to make a bridge."

When the hare smiled as if she did not believe this possible, the big fellow boasted that, if necessary, he could build a bridge of crocodile backs that would reach to China.

"Now, Old Croc, all you say may be true, but I should like to see you first make a bridge just over to that land yonder," said she. "Besides how can I count them, unless you range your-



selves side by side. You can't do it. I dare you!"

Old Croc was simple-minded, but he showed that he was a general. He bellowed out orders to his battalions of crocodiles to range themselves side by side, with their backs close together, until the whole distance from island to mainland was a level space of bony backs. No sooner was this done than Miss Hare leaped upon the first crocodile and quickly stepping from one to another over their flat noses, cried out:

"Keep still, all of you, while I count—one, two, three, four, five, six."

It was a funny sight to see a mile of long snouts sticking out of the water, for the crocodiles' noses were almost so flat that Miss Hare never once hurt her dainty hind paws as she stepped over as fast as her legs would carry her. So swiftly did Miss Hare hop, skip, jump and, once in a while, leap two noses at once, that in six wags of her tail she was over and across.

Instead of saying "thank you," or "I'm a thousand times obliged to you," as polite Japanese little folks do, she jeered at the crocodiles as she jumped off the last horny back and shouted:

"Begone, Old Croc, with your stupid fellows! I don't need you any more," and she started to run away.

But Old Croc, who was as mad as fire, ordered some of the youngest and swiftest crocodiles to go after her. They went fast too, with their tusks sticking out of their jaws. They chased the Hare around and caught her. They then pulled off all her white fur of which she was so proud, and left her shivering on the beach.

“Try it again, Miss Donkey Ears, if you can,” one snorted. Then they plunged in the water, swam away and reported to Old Croc, who was down in the dumps at being fooled. So all he said was:

“Aru-béki” (served her right).

Poor Miss Hare! She buried her body in the sand to keep warm, but she felt as naked as a baby in a bath-tub stripped of her beautiful white fur, of which she had been so proud, and wondered what she should do.

While she was crying bitterly over her sad fate, along came some men. From the way their long hair was done up into two little puffs, one on each side of the head, they seemed to be princes. But one was very cruel, even though he spoke gentle words to her. When Miss Hare sobbed and between her tears had told her story, the cruel fellow said:

“Go bathe in the sea and then come and sit in the wind and your white fur will grow again.”

But oh what pain! After Miss Hare had

bathed in the brine of the sea, she sat on the beach, while the breezes blew on her body. She felt chilly, but in a few minutes she was dry and she thought she would get her fur back.

But soon her body was puckered, and she was in pain. Her skin first became hard, and cracked, while the salt maddened her with the misery it caused.

While in this terrible condition, another prince came along, who was carrying a bag of grain on his back. Tenderly pitying Miss Hare, he asked what was the matter and who had pulled her fur all out.

Cheered by the gentle tones of his voice, Miss Hare told the whole story of both the angry crocodiles, and the cruel man. Then she begged piteously for some medicine to make her hair grow again.

“Then you really did deceive the crocodile and you are suffering because of your folly?”

“Yes, yes, 'tis true, but I am very sorry. Now won't you tell me how to get my fur back again?”

“Well, since you repent of your deceit, I shall tell you of a sure remedy. You see the fresh water pond over there? Go first and wash off all the salt from your body. Then on the shore you will find in the ground, beneath a certain sort of cherry tree, much of the pollen that has fallen



from the flowers. Roll over and over in this pollen for a long time and your fur will surely grow again as before."

The prince went his way. Then Miss Hare took her bath, as he had told her, in the fresh water pond. After drying herself she rolled and rolled and rolled in the cherry blossom pollen.

What was her surprise to find her fur growing on again, until she stood forth in her new dress as if she wore robes of ermine, soft as down and as white as snow.

So quietly was all this done, that when she ran swiftly after the prince to thank him, she was able to catch up to him. Coming close to him, all out of breath, after showing her gratitude she begged to know what she could do for him in return for his kindness.

"Now please tell me who you are," she said.

"I am not a prince, as you think me to be. I am a fairy being and those who passed on before me are my brothers. There is a lovely princess in this country, of whom they have heard. So all of them have gone on to see which one she will choose and marry. But I am only attending upon them and so I carry this bag for them. It contains their rice to eat."

At this Miss Hare was astonished and at first could hardly speak; for, when he spoke his name, she knew that the people honored him as the Lord

of the Land. Indeed they almost worshipped him.

“I am sure,” said she, “that the princess will not accept any of your brothers; but, when she hears of your kindness, will choose you, and I will hail you as her future husband.”

However, the man paid little attention to what a hare might say and went on his way.

But it was just as the White Hare said. One after another the brothers went up to the lovely princess and offered to marry her. Each one pleaded his cause and told of his abilities, but she, one by one, refused them all. Oh, how sorry and disappointed they were and some went home crying!

But when the lovely princess caught sight of the one with the kind face, she, without waiting to hear Miss Hare’s whole story, went forward to him and said:

“I am yours. I give myself to you.”

So there was a grand wedding and Miss Hare was given a place of honor. Instead of traveling abroad, she was content to live in the palace of the happy couple, who lived in peace and love ever afterward.

## IV

### THE TRAVELS OF THE TWO FROGS

**L**ONG, long ago, in the good old days before the hairy-faced and pale-cheeked men from over the Sea of Great Peace came to Japan; before the black coal-smoke and snorting iron horse scared the white heron from the rice-fields; before black crows and fighting sparrows, which fear not man, perched on telegraph wires, or ever a railway was thought of, there lived two Frogs—one in a well in Kioto, the other in a lotus-pond in Osaka, forty miles away.

Now it is a common proverb in the Land of the Gods<sup>1</sup> that “the frog in the well knows not the great ocean,” and the Kioto Frog had so often heard this scornful sneer from the maids who came to draw out water with their long bamboo-handled buckets that he resolved to travel abroad and see the world, and especially the great ocean.

“I’ll see for myself,” said Mr. Frog, as he packed his wallet and wiped his spectacles,

<sup>1</sup>Japan.



“ what this great ocean is that they talk so much about. I’ll wager it isn’t half as deep or wide as my well, where I can see the stars even in daylight.”

Now the truth was, a recent earthquake had greatly reduced the depth of the well and the water was getting very shallow. Mr. Frog informed the family of his intentions. Mrs. Frog wept a great deal; but, drying her eyes with her paper handkerchief, she declared she would count the hours on her fingers till he came back, and at every morning and evening meal would set out his table with food on it, just as if he were at home. She tied up a little lacquered box full of boiled rice and snails for his journey, wrapped it around with a silk napkin, and, putting his extra clothes in a bundle, swung it on his back. Tying it over his neck, he seized his staff and was ready to go.

“ *Sayonara*,” cried he, as, with a tear in his eye, he walked away; for that is the Japanese for “ good-bye.”

“ *Sayonara*,” croaked Mrs. Frog and the whole family of young frogs in a chorus.

Two of the tiniest froggies were still babies, that is, they were yet pollywogs, with a half inch of tail still on them; and, of course, were carried about by being strapped on the back of their older brothers.

Mr. Frog being now on land, out of his well, noticed that the other animals did not leap, but walked upright on their hind legs; and, not wishing to be eccentric, he likewise began briskly walking the same way.

Now it happened that about the same time the Osaka Frog had become restless and dissatisfied with life on the edges of his lotus-ditch. He had made up his mind to "cast the lion's cub into the valley."

"Why! that is tall talk for a frog, I must say!" you may exclaim. "What did he mean?"

To see what he meant, we will go back a bit. I must tell you that the Osaka Frog was a philosopher. Right at the edge of his lotus-pond was a monastery, full of Buddhist monks, who every day studied their sacred rolls and droned over the books of the sage, to learn them by heart. Our Frog had heard them so often that he could (in frog language, of course) repeat many of their wise sentences and intone responses to their evening prayers put up by the great idol Amida. Indeed, our Frog had so often listened to their debates on texts from the classics that he had himself become a sage and a philosopher. Yet, as the proverb says, "the sage is not happy."

Why not? In spite of a soft mud-bank, plenty of green scum, stagnant water, and shady lotus leaves, a fat wife, and a numerous family—in

## TRAVELS OF THE TWO FROGS 33

short, everything to make a frog happy—his forehead, or rather gullet, was wrinkled with care from long pondering of knotty problems, such as the following:

The monks often came down to the edge of the pond to look at the pink and white lotus. One summer day, as a little frog, hardly out of his tadpole state, with a small fragment of tail still left, sat basking on a huge round leaf, one monk said to another:

“Of what does that remind you?”

“The babies of frogs will become but frogs,” said one shaven pate, laughing.

“What think you?”

“The white lotus flower springs out of the black mud,” said the other, solemnly, as both walked away.

The old Frog, sitting near by, overheard them and began to philosophize: “Humph! The babies of frogs will become but frogs, hey? If mud becomes lotus, why shouldn’t a frog become a man? Why not? If my pet son should travel abroad and see the world—go to Kyoto, for instance—why shouldn’t he be as wise as those shining-headed men, I wonder? I shall try it, anyhow. I’ll send my son on a journey to Kyoto. I’ll ‘cast the lion’s cub into the valley,’” which, you see, meant pretty much the same thing.

Plump! splash! sounded the water, as a pair



of webby feet disappeared. The "lion's cub" was soon ready, after much paternal advice, and much counsel to beware of being gobbled up by long-legged storks, and trod on by impolite men, and struck at by bad boys.

"Even in the Capital there are boors," said Father Frog.

Now it so happened that the old Frog from Kioto and the "lion's cub" from Osaka started each from his home at the same time. Nothing of importance occurred to either of them until, as luck would have it, they met on a hill near Hashimoto, which is half-way between the two cities. Both were footsore, and websore, and very tired, especially about the hips, on account of the unfroglike manner of walking, instead of hopping as they had been used to.

"*Ohio gozarimasu*," said the "lion's cub" to the old Frog, by way of "good-morning," as he fell on all-fours and bowed his head to the ground three times, squinting up over his left eye, to see if the other Frog was paying equal deference in return.

"Yes, good-day," replied the Kioto Frog.

"It is rather fine weather to-day," said the youngster.

"Yes, it is very fine," replied the old fellow.

"I am Gamataro, from Osaka, the oldest son of Lord Bullfrog, Prince of the Lotus-Ditch."

## TRAVELS OF THE TWO FROGS 35

“Your Lordship must be weary with your journey. I am Sir Frog of the Well in Kioto. I started out to see the ‘great ocean’ from Osaka; but, I declare, my hips are so dreadfully tired that I believe that I’ll give up my plan and content myself with a look from this hill.”

The truth must be owned that the old Frog was not only on his hind legs, but also on his last legs, when he stood up to look at Osaka; while the youngster was tired enough to believe anything. The old fellow, wiping his face, spoke up:

“Suppose we save ourselves the trouble of the journey. I have been told that this hill is half-way between the two cities, and while I see Osaka and the sea, you can get a good look at Kioto.”

“Happy thought!” said the Osaka Frog.

Then both reared themselves upon their hind-legs, once more, and stretching upon their toes, body to body, and neck to neck, propped each other up, rolled their goggles and looked steadily, as they supposed, on the places which they each wished to see. Now every one knows that a frog has eyes mounted in that part of his head which is *front when he is down and back when he stands up*.

Long and steadily they gazed, until, at last, their toes being tired, they fell down on all-fours.

“ I declare! ” said the older Frog, “ Osaka looks just like Kioto; and as for ‘ the great ocean ’ those stupid maids talked about, I don’t see any at all, unless they mean that strip of river that looks for all the world like the Yodo. I don’t believe there is any ‘ great ocean ’ ! ”

“ As for my part, ” said the other, “ I am satisfied that it’s all folly to go further; for Kioto is as like Osaka as one grain of rice is like another. ”

Thereupon both congratulated themselves upon the happy labor-saving expedient by which they had spared themselves a long journey, much leg-weariness, and some danger. They departed, after exchanging many compliments; and, dropping again into a frog’s hop, they leaped back in half the time—the one to his well and the other to his pond. There each told the story of both cities looking exactly alike; thus demonstrating the folly of those foolish folks called Men. As for the old gentleman in the lotus-pond, he was so glad to get the “ cub ” back again that he never again tried to reason out the problems of philosophy.

And so to this day the frog in the well knows not and believes not in the “ great ocean. ” The babies of frogs become but frogs, and it is vain to teach batrachians philosophy; for all such labor is “ like pouring water in a frog’s face. ”



## V

### THE CHILD OF THE THUNDER

**I**N among the hills of Echizen, within sight of the snowy mountain called Hakuzan, lived a farmer named Bimbo. He was very poor, but frugal and industrious; and was fond of children though he had none himself. He longed to adopt a son to bear his name, and often talked the matter over with his wife, but being so dreadfully poor both thought it best not to adopt any, until they had bettered their condition and increased the area of their land. For all the property Bimbo owned was the earth in a little gully, which he himself was reclaiming. A tiny rivulet, flowing from a spring in the crevice of the rocks above, after trickling over the boulders, rolled down the gully to join a brook in the larger valley below. Bimbo had with great labor, after many years, made dams or terraces of stone, inside which he had thrown soil, partly got from the mountain sides, but mainly carried in baskets on the backs of himself and his wife, from the valley below. By such weary toil, continued year in and year out, small beds of soil were formed, in which

rice could be planted and grown. The little rivulet supplied the needful water; for rice, the daily food of laborer and farmer, must be planted and cultivated in soft mud under water. So the little rivulet, which once leaped over the rock and cut its way singing to the valley, now spread itself quietly over each terrace, making more than a dozen descents before it reached the fields below.

Yet after all his toil for a score of years, working every day from the first croak of the raven, until the stars came out, Bimbo and his wife owned less than an acre of terrace land. Sometimes a summer would pass, and little or no rain fall; then the rivulet dried up and crops failed. It seemed all in vain that their backs were bent and their foreheads seamed and wrinkled with care. Many a time did Bimbo have hard work of it even to pay his taxes, which sometimes amounted to half his crop. Many a time did he shake his head, muttering the discouraged farmer's proverb, "A new field gives a scant crop," the words of which mean also, "Human life is but fifty years."

One summer day after a long drought, when the young rice sprouts were turning yellow at the tips, the clouds began to gather and roll, and soon a smart shower fell, the lightning glittered, and the hills echoed with claps of thunder. But Bimbo, hoe in hand, was so glad to see the rain







There lay a little boy, rosy and warm.



fall, and the pattering drops felt so cool and refreshing, that he worked on, strengthening the terrace to resist the little flood about to come.

Pretty soon the storm rattled very near him, and he thought he had better seek shelter, lest the thunder should strike and kill him. For Bimbo, like all his neighbors, had often heard stories of the shaggy god of the thunder-drums, who lives in the skies and rides on the storm, and sometimes kills people by throwing out of the clouds at them a terrible creature like a cat, with iron-like claws and a hairy body.

Just as Bimbo threw his hoe over his shoulder and started to move, a terrible blinding flash of lightning dazzled his eyes. It was immediately followed by a deafening crash, and the thunder fell just in front of him. He covered his eyes with his hands, but finding himself unhurt, uttered a prayer of thanks to Buddha for safety. Then he uncovered his eyes and looked down at his feet.

There lay a little boy, rosy and warm, crowing in the most lively manner, and not frightened by the rain in the least. The farmer's eyes opened very wide, but happy and nearly surprised out of his senses, he picked up the child tenderly in his arms, and took him home to his old wife.

"Here's a gift from Heaven," said Bimbo; "we'll adopt him as our own son and call him

Rai-taro," which means "the child of the thunder."

The wife also was delighted with the pretty boy, and never tired of caring for him. So Rai-taro lived with them and became a very dutiful and loving child. He was as kind and obedient to his foster-parents as though he had been born in their house. He never liked to play with other children, but kept all day in the fields with his foster-father, sporting with the rivulet and looking at the clouds and sky. Even when the strolling players and the "Lion of Korea" came into the village, and every boy and girl and nurse and woman was sure to be out in great glee, the child of the thunder stayed up in the field, or climbed on the high rocks to watch the sailing of the birds and the flowing of the water and the river far away.

And now great prosperity came to the farmer, and he laid it all to the sweet child who had fallen to him from the clouds. It was very curious that rain often fell on Bimbo's field when none fell elsewhere; so that Bimbo grew rich. He believed that the boy Raitaro beckoned to the clouds, and they shed their rain for him alone.

A good many summers passed by, and Raitaro had grown to be a tall and handsome lad, almost a man and eighteen years old. On his birthday the old farmer and the good wife made a little



## THE CHILD OF THE THUNDER 41

feast for their foster-child. They ate and drank and talked of the thunder-storm, out of which Raitaro was born.

Finally the young man said solemnly:

“ My dear parents, I thank you very much for your kindness to me, but I must now say farewell. I hope you will always be happy.”

Then, in a moment, before they had a chance to ask him what he meant, all trace of a human form had disappeared, and floating in the air they saw a tiny white dragon, which hovered for a moment above them and then flew away. The old couple ran out of doors to watch it, and it seemed to their astonished gaze to grow larger as it went away. Bigger and bigger it grew, taking its course to the hills above, where the piled-up white clouds, which form on a summer's afternoon, seemed built up like towers and castles of silver. Toward one of these the dragon moved, until, as they watched his form, now grown to a mighty size, it disappeared from view.

The farmer and his wife knelt in reverence and said farewell, with tears in their eyes, yet with a strange peace in their hearts. After this, as they were now old and white-headed, they ceased from their toil and lived in comfort all the rest of their days. When they died their ashes were laid away in the cemetery of the temple yard, and their tomb was carved in the form of a white dragon,

## 42 JAPANESE FAIRY TALES

which in spite of mosses and lichens may still be seen among the ancient monuments of the little hamlet.

## VI

### THE TONGUE-CUT SPARROW

**T**HERE was once an old man who had a wife with a very bad temper. She did not have any children, and would not take the trouble to adopt a son. So for a little pet he kept a tiny sparrow, and fed it with great care. The woman, not satisfied with scolding her husband, hated the sparrow. Her temper was especially bad on wash days, when her back and knees were strained over the low tub, which rested on the ground.

One day while the man was gone to his work in the rice-fields, the wife was washing the clothes, and had made some starch, and set it in a red wooden bowl to cool. While her back was turned, the sparrow hopped down on the edge of the bowl, and pecked at some of the starch. In a rage the woman seized a pair of scissors and cut off the tip of the sparrow's tongue. Flinging the bird in the air she cried out, "Now be off with you!" So the poor sparrow, all bleeding, flew away.

When the man came back and found the bird



gone, he made a great ado. He asked his wife, and she told him what she had done and why. The sorrowful old man grieved sorely for his pet, and after looking in every place and calling it by name, gave it up as lost.

Days and weeks and months sped by, and the man was still older and more wrinkled, when one day while wandering over the mountains he again met his sparrow. "Good-morning!" he cried; and to his surprise and delight the sparrow answered him. The clipped tongue had given the bird power of speech. Then each bowed low and made mutual inquiries as to health. The sparrow begged the man to visit his humble abode, and meet his wife and two daughters.

The man went with him and found a nice little house with a bamboo garden, tiny waterfall, stepping stone and everything complete. Then Mrs. Sparrow brought in slices of sugar-jelly, rock-candy, sweet potato custard, and a bowl of hot starch sprinkled with sugar, and a pair of chopsticks on a tray. Miss Sparrow, the elder daughter, brought the tea-caddy and teapot, and in a snap of the fingers had a good cup of tea ready, which she offered on a tray, kneeling.

"Please help yourself. The refreshments are very poor, but I hope you will excuse our plainness," said Mother Sparrow. The delighted old man, wondering in himself at such a polite family

of sparrows, ate heartily, and drank several cups of tea. Finally, on being pressed, he remained all night.

For several days he enjoyed a visit at the sparrow's home. He looked at the landscapes and the moonlight, feasted to his heart's content, and played checkers with the little daughter. In the evening Mrs. Sparrow would bring out the refreshments and the wine, and seat the guest on a silken cushion, while she played the guitar. Mr. Sparrow and his two daughters danced, sang, and made merry until the man leaning on the velvet arm-rest forgot his cares, his old limbs and his wife's tongue, and felt like a youth again.

But on the fifth day he said he must go home. His host was sorry to hear this, but brought out two baskets made of plaited rattan, such as are used in traveling, carried on men's shoulders. Placing them before his guest, he said, "Please do me the honor to accept a parting gift. Take either one you prefer."

Now one basket was heavy, and the other light. The old man, not being greedy, said he would take the lighter one. So with many thanks and bows and good-byes, he set off homeward.

He reached his hut safely, but instead of a kind welcome his wife began to scold him for being away so long. He begged her to be quiet, and telling of his visit to the sparrows, opened

the basket, while the scowling beldame held her tongue, out of sheer curiosity.

Oh, what a splendid sight! There were gold and silver coin, and gems, and coral, and crystal, and amber, and a never-failing bag of money, and an invisible coat and hat, and rolls of books, and all manner of precious things. It seemed that they never would reach the bottom of that magic basket.

At the sight of so much wealth, the woman's scowl changed to a smile of greedy joy. "I'll go right off and get another present from the sparrows," said she.

Her husband plead with her not to go, saying that they already had more than enough to last them the rest of their lives. But she would not listen to him. Binding on her straw sandals, and tucking up her skirts, she seized her staff and set off on the road.

Arriving at the sparrow's house, she began to flatter Mr. Sparrow by soft speeches. Of course the polite bird invited her into his house, but nothing but a cup of tea was offered her, while his wife and daughters kept out of sight. Seeing that she was not going to get any good-bye gift, she made bold to ask for one. The sparrow then brought out and set before her two baskets, one heavy and the other light. She eagerly seized the heavier one, without so much as say-



ing "thank you," and carried it back in triumph with her. When she got home she opened it, expecting all kinds of riches.

But the moment she took off the lid, a horrible cuttlefish rushed at her, a skeleton poked his bony fingers in her face, and a long, hairy serpent, with a big head and lolling tongue, sprang out and coiled around her, cracking her bones, and squeezing out her breath, till she died.

After the good man had buried his wife, he adopted a son to comfort his old age, and with his treasures lived at ease all his days.

## VII

### THE APE AND THE CRAB

**I**N the land where neither the monkeys nor the cats have tails, and the persimmons grow to be as large as apples and with seeds bigger than a melon's, there once lived a land crab in the side of a sand hill. One day an Ape came along having a persimmon seed, which he offered to swap with the Crab for a rice-cake. The Crab agreed, and planting the seed in his garden went out every day to watch it grow. And so fertile is that country, that soon a fine tree had grown up from the seed.

By and by the Ape came to visit the Crab, and seeing the tree laden with the yellow-brown fruit, he begged a few persimmons. The Crab, asking pardon of the Ape, said he could not climb the tree to offer him any, but agreed to give his visitor half, if he would mount the tree and pluck them.

So the Ape ran up the tree, while the Crab waited below, expecting to eat the ripe fruit. But the Ape sitting on a limb first filled his pockets full, and then picking off all the best ones, greedily ate the pulp, and threw the skin

and stones in the Crab's face. Every once in a while, he would pull off a green sour persimmon and hit the Crab hard, until his shell was nearly cracked. At last the poor Crab thought he would get the best of the Ape. So when his enemy had eaten his fill until he was bulged out, he cried out:

"Now, Ape, I dare you to come down head-foremost. You can't do it."

The other would not take a dare, and at once began to descend, head downward. This was just what the Crab wanted, for all the finest persimmons rolled out of his pockets on the ground. The Crab quickly gathered them up, and with both arms full ran off to his hole. The Ape was very angry at this trick. He kindled a fire, and blew the smoke down the hole, until the Crab was nearly choked and had to crawl out to save his life. Then the wicked Ape beat him soundly, and left him for dead.

The Crab had not been long thus, when three travelers, a Rice-Mortar, an Egg, and a Wasp found him lying on the ground. They carried him into the house, bound up his wounds and while he lay in bed they planned how they might destroy his enemy. They all talked of the matter over their cups of tea, and after the Mortar had smoked several pipes of tobacco, a plan was agreed on.



Taking the Crab along, stiff and sore as he was, they marched to the Ape's castle. The Wasp flew inside, and found that their enemy was away from home. Then all entered and hid themselves. The Egg cuddled up under the ashes in the hearth; the Wasp flew into the closet; the Mortar hid behind the door; the Crab sat beside the fire; and here they waited for the Ape to come home.

Toward evening the Ape arrived, and throwing off his coat (which was just what the Wasp wanted) he lighted a match and kindling a fire hung on the kettle for a cup of tea, and pulled out his pipe for a smoke. Just as he sat down by the hearth to salute the Crab, the Egg in the fire burst and the hot yolk flew all over him and in his eye, nearly blinding him. He rushed out to the bathroom to plunge in the tub of cold water, when the Wasp flew at him and stung his nose. Slipping down, he fell flat on the floor, when the Mortar rolled on him and crushed him to death. Then the victorious party congratulated the Crab on their victory. Grateful for the friendship thus shown, the whole company, Crab, Mortar and Wasp lived in peace together.

The Crab married the daughter of a rich crab that lived over the hill, and a great feast of per-simmons was spread before the bride's relatives who came to see the ceremony. By and by a

little crab was born which became a great pet with the Mortar and Wasp. With no more apes to plague them, they lived very happily ever afterward.

## VIII

### THE WONDERFUL TEA-KETTLE

**A** LONG time ago there was an old priest who lived in a temple and was very devout. He was also very poor. He cooked his own rice, boiled his own tea, swept his own floor, and lived frugally as an honest priest should do.

One day the kettle in which he boiled water for his tea got broken, and he did not know what to do, as he had no money to buy a new one. But the next morning, behold! a shiny brass tea-kettle was sitting outside his door. Overjoyed he returned thanks, and built a fire in the square fireplace in the middle of the floor. A rope and chain to hold the rice-pot and tea-kettle hung down from the covered hole in the ceiling which did duty as a chimney. A pair of brass tongs was stuck in the ashes, and soon the fire blazed merrily. At the side of the fireplace, on the floor, was his tray filled with tiny teacups, a pewter tea-caddy, a bamboo tea-stirrer, and a little dipper. The priest having finished sweeping the ashes off the edges of the hearth with a little









The spout of the kettle had turned into a badger's nose.



## THE WONDERFUL TEA-KETTLE 53

whisk-broom made of hawk's feathers, was just about to put on the tea when "suzz, suzz," sang the shiny tea-kettle spout; and then "pattari—pattari!" said the lid, as it flapped up and down, and the kettle swung backward and forward.

"What does this mean?" said the old priest with a start; for, wonder of wonders, the spout of the kettle had turned into a badger's nose with its big whiskers, while from the other side sprouted out a long bushy tail!

"Ho, ho!" cried the priest, with a long string of Japanese words which would sound strange to you. And in terror he dropped the tea-caddy, spilling the green tea all over the matting, as four hairy legs appeared under the kettle, and the strange compound, half badger and half kettle, jumped off the fire, and began running around the room. To the priest's horror it leaped on a shelf, puffed out its belly and began to beat a tune with its fore-paws as if it were a drum. The old priest's pupils, hearing the racket, rushed in, and after a lively chase, upsetting piles of books and breaking some of the teacups, secured the badger, and squeezed him into a keg used for storing pickled radishes. They fastened down the lid with a heavy stone, and felt sure that the strong odor of the radishes would kill the beast, for no man could possibly survive such a smell, and it was not likely a badger could.



The next morning the tinker of the village called in and the priest told him about his strange visitor. Wishing to show him the animal, he cautiously lifted the lid of the cask, lest the badger might, after all, be still alive, in spite of the strong vinegar pickles, when lo! there was nothing but the shiny brass tea-kettle. Fearing that the utensil might play the same prank again, the priest was glad to sell it to the tinker, who on his part secretly thought the priest had been dreaming, and was glad to give another kettle in exchange for it, and some cash to boot. He carried it proudly to his junk shop, though he thought it felt unusually heavy.

The tinker went to bed as usual that night with his tiny paper-shaded lamp just back of his head. About midnight, hearing a strange noise like the flapping up and down of a pot-lid, he sat up in bed, rubbed his eyes, and there was the bewitched tea-kettle covered with fur and sprouting out legs. In short, it was turning into a hairy beast.

“Don’t beat me or shut me in a vinegar keg,” it said, “for I am really kind-hearted and wish you well.”

“What can I do for you?” asked the tinker.

“Feed me a little rice now and then, and don’t put me on the fire as that stupid priest did. Look here.”

Going over to a corner of the room and taking

a fan from the rack, the badger climbed up on the frame of the lamp, and began to dance on its one hind leg, waving the fan with its fore-paw. It played many other tricks, until the man started up, and then the badger turned into a tea-kettle again.

“ I declare,” said the tinker as he woke up next morning, and talked the matter over with his wife, “ I’ll just ‘ raise a mountain ’<sup>1</sup> on this kettle. It certainly is a very highly accomplished tea-kettle. I’ll call it by some high-sounding name and exhibit it to the public.”

“ You’ve been dreaming,” scoffed his wife; “ that’s only an ordinary brass tea-kettle.”

“ Just watch it and see,” replied the tinker.

So they watched the next night, and sure enough it turned into a badger again.

The delighted tinker hired a professional showman for his business agent, and built a little theatre and stage. Then he gave an order to a friend of his, an artist, to paint scenery, with the sacred mountain Fujiyama in the background and cranes flying through the air, a crimson sun shining through the bamboo, a red moon rising over the waves, with golden clouds and tortoises and such like. Then he stretched a tight rope of rice-straw across the stage, and the handbills being stuck up in all the barber shops in town, and

<sup>1</sup> Earn my fortune.

wooden tickets branded with "Accomplished and Lucky Tea-Kettle Performance, Admit One,"—the show was opened. The house was speedily filled, the people coming in parties, bringing their teapots full of tea and picnic boxes full of rice, and eggs, and dumplings made of millet meal, sugared roast-pea cakes, and other refreshments; because they came to stay all day. Mothers brought their babies with them, for the children enjoyed it most of all.

Then the tinker, dressed up in his wide ceremonial clothes, with a big fan in his hand, came out on the platform, made his politest bow and set the wonderful tea-kettle on the stage. At a wave of his fan, the kettle ran around on four legs, half badger and half kettle, clanking its lid and wagging its tail. How the children shouted; and so should you and I if we could only have been there! Next it turned into a badger, swelled out its body and beat a tune on it like a drum. It danced a jig on the tight rope, and walked the slack rope, holding a fan, or an umbrella in its paw, stood on its head, and finally at a flourish of its master's fan became a cold brass tea-kettle again. The audience were wild with delight, and as the fame of the wonderful tea-kettle spread, many people came from great distances to see it perform.

Year after year the tinker exhibited the wonder



## THE WONDERFUL TEA-KETTLE 57

until he grew immensely rich. Then he retired from the show business, and out of gratitude took the old kettle to the temple again and deposited it there as a precious relic. The old priest was given a goodly sum of money to do nothing else but take care of it; and all his life it had all the rice and dumplings it wanted. After his death it turned into an ordinary kettle, and has stayed so ever since. If you don't believe it, you can go to the temple some day and see it for yourself.

## IX

### THE LADY FROM THE SILVER MOON

**I**N the Land of the Silver Moon, where a great many fairies live, every one is expected to have a sweet temper. They must never pout, or scowl, or look daggers, or put on a wry face at any one, or at any of the tasks they are set to do.

This is the law and if any break it, they are condemned to go down and live in this world of mortals.

Now it is thought by the moon ladies to be a very dirty place, where no moon fairy would want to live. Compared with life on the bright Silver Moon Land, it is a wretched hole. Those who live in our world are pitied by the fairies who think that mortal men and women are miserable creatures.

So in Moon Land, everybody tries to be lovely. The first greeting, every day, is not "good-morning," or "how are you?" but "how is your temper?"

Now there was a certain fairy, the daughter of the King of Moon Land, who broke the law and this story is about the way she was punished.

She was very lovely to look at, in her splendid clothes and pretty face, of which she was very vain. And because she knew she was good looking—for the mirror told her so—she thought everybody must obey her. She often fell into fits of bad temper and then she behaved in a very naughty way.

So the King of Moon Land said: “Although she is my own daughter, I must correct her. If I banish her to the earth for a few years, she will get over her bad temper and be my sweet daughter again.”

So, ordering a silver chariot drawn by two winged dragons, he had her taken up out of bed while she was asleep and put in the chariot, well wrapped up, with a wise old fairy to look after his daughter.

This old fairy was a wizard, who had orders to make the Princess as small in size as a man’s middle finger. Then he was to take her to a bamboo forest and set her inside the hollow cane, on a joint. Besides this, he was to deposit within several of the bamboo stalks little piles of gold and silver. After doing this, he was to return at once to Moon Land.

So after reducing her to a third of a span long,



he left the little creature asleep in the bamboo forest and came away.

Now near by one of the groves of this bamboo forest lived an old fellow who got his living by cutting the tall canes and making them into spoons, cups, fan handles, brushes and rakes and selling these in the town, not far away. This poor man and his wife had no children, but oh, how they wanted for one or more in their old age to care for them!

One day rambling in that part of the bamboo forest in which the feathery or fluffy variety was in blossom, he saw a light shining and rays that seemed to flash out of a bamboo joint. Going near it, he split open the stalk and there behold was a lovely little girl only a few inches tall. She was dressed in fine clothes such as the noble ladies wore at Court. Her body glistened like a star and she seemed glad to see him.

He brought home the prize to his old wife, who was delighted. She was very obedient to her new parents and did many things to please them, so they were very happy. They gave her a name and title in Japanese, which means Princess Radiance of the Fluffy Bamboo, or, for short, Nayo.

In a few years she grew up to be so fair and lovely that the fame of her beauty spread all over the land of Japan. What was even more

wonderful, the old bamboo cutter found inside many of the bamboo stalks little stacks of gold and silver that were round like coins. So he grew very rich and by and by built a lovely mansion. Young men came from every part of the land to see her, but the Princess did not care to see any of them. After a while they came in such crowds, that the old bamboo cutter built a high fence around his house to keep them out; but even then they peeped through the palings hoping to catch a glimpse of her.

As for wanting to marry, even a noble, the Moon Princess cared nothing. Her only wish was to get back to the silvery world in the sky, and this she fully expected sometime to do. She told her foster parents, the old man and woman, that she would not be a wife to any man on earth, not even to the Mikado himself. So the old man refused every suitor saying he would give her to wife to no one, or make her wed against her will. As she was so young, he did not press the matter, although in ancient Japan there were no old maids or old bachelors. Every girl was expected to marry.

Yet all the same, dozens of men who were dazed to see the radiant maid kept on crowding around the house, hoping to see her come out. They peeped through cracks in the fence, or they climbed up trees, to get a view of her. Some

even brought their lunches, of rice and fish and pickles, and waited all day in front of the gate to see it open and the Princess come out.

It was all in vain that the old daddy told them to go away. Some of them did return to their homes, even hundreds of miles away, but soon they came back, for they were crazy to see her. They did not know her name, but when they talked about her, they spoke of Princess Radiance, Moonbeam, Splendor, Glory, and by many other pretty names. Even two Imperial princes, sons of the Mikado, came to try to win the wondrous maid.

All this time, the old bamboo cutter did not know and never dreamed for a moment that her home was in the moon and that she might go back to it; but knowing that he and his wife were very old and likely soon to die, he wondered who would take care of his shining daughter. He could not think for a moment of leaving her alone, without a husband.

So at last he went into her room and had a long talk with his daughter about getting married. The throng of lovers was increasing and it was not right to send them all away. She ought to prove them, and, to test their affection, she should lay upon each one some task to perform. If the young fellows, who declared that they were dead in love with her, were sincere, they must do



some great thing, such as only a very wise or mighty man could accomplish.

The Princess thought that this would be fair and she promised to wed the lover who did what she asked.

When the old man gave her own message to the suitors outside, they all agreed and each one went off to obey her and get what was wanted. Not one but was sure he could win her for his wife.

Now these were the tasks she laid on them and the things she wanted them to get and bring to her:

1. To get Lord Buddha's bowl, which he carried when begging alms. It was in India and made of stone, not lovely to look at, but very famous. Kings would gladly give diamonds for it.

2. To get a jeweled branch from the tree, with golden roots and silver trunk, that grew on Horai, the Enchanted Island in the Eastern Sea.

3. To bring her the robe made of the skin and fur of the magic animal known as the Fire-Proof Rat, that lived only in the distant mountains of China.

4. To obtain the jewel of many colors from the dragon's neck in the World Under the Sea.

5. To get the precious Shell which the swallow keeps hidden in its nest.

Now when the edict of the Princess was made public to the crowd of lovers that loitered around the gate and fence, they all scattered. They, who were poor men, knew that only the nobles or men who were rich could travel abroad and be able to get what was wanted, even if they were brave enough to go on the long voyage.

So, for many months the Moon Lady was at peace and enjoyed herself among the flowers, while the old bamboo cutter and his wife loved the quiet of their home.

It was only the rich noblemen that could afford to get the treasures which the Moon Princess wanted. They had money enough. Now we shall see whether these suitors for the maid's hand were also brave and wise.

In those days it took about three years to sail away in a junk, through the seas to India, and to face the hot winds and storms on the way. It made one's blood run cold at the thought. What if the seeker should get into a typhoon and be drowned?

So the lazy lover, though he was a prince, hid himself in the mountains for thirty-six months. Then, finding an old stone bowl, once used by beggars, he thrust it into a costly bag of silk brocade, to make it appear to be of great value; for the Japanese always keep jewels and precious things in satin or brocade bags.

Then he penned a letter, such as lovers usually write, telling how he had sailed the seas over to get this holy man's bowl. According to courtly custom, he fastened the bag with its contents to a sprig of flowers (not real ones, but made of silk) and sent them to the Princess.

Now this lady from Moon Land, who had heard much about the great Lord Buddha, expected to see a bowl which, though old and of stone, sparkled with its own light, or was gemmed with diamonds. Eagerly opening the bag and seeing only the letter and a dirty old bowl, hardly worth looking at, she sent it back.

The lover threw the bowl away, but, instead of being ashamed of himself, kept on writing love verses on perfumed paper and sent them to her. But the Princess from Moon Land paid no more attention to him.

So nowadays, they say of people who have no shame, "He has thrown away his bowl."

The second prince also pretended to sail away to distant seas and lands, and to have landed on the floating island, on which the high mountain of Horai reaches to the skies. He said he had found a branch of gems that grew on trees of gold and silver.

He came to the bamboo cutter's palace, in clothes all dusty with travel and told a big story about storms at sea, and being nearly drowned



in the high waves, and of dragons and the jewel islands and how, after four hundred days, he had arrived home. Now he had come to marry the Princess Moonbeam, as he called her.

But while he was yet talking to her foster father, the Princess saw coming six men, who handed in a bill for a thousand days' work on a jewel branch, which they had made for the prince. This fellow had only sailed away to an island three days distant and these jewelers had worked for him during three years, making the golden branch studded with gems. He had not paid them and now they wanted their money.

Shamefaced and angry, the prince ran away to the mountains and hid himself. He was never heard of again.

The nobleman who was to get the robe made of the fur of the fire-rat of China, sent a great sum of money to a friend in that country, who was able to get one of these strange and curious coats which are kept as relics in an idol temple. It was of a golden green color and of brilliant lustre and said to resist fire. The lover put this fur coat in a box of fine wood covered with gold lacquer sparkling with jewels. Then he hurried to the Bamboo Palace, surely expecting to bring away the Princess Moonbeam as his wife.

Since the two lovers had played tricks upon the lady from the moon, she had become wary.

So she ordered the robe to be put on the red-hot charcoal in the brazier, thinking it surely was fire-proof.

But again a sham! In a moment it caught fire and went up in smoke. In less than two minutes nothing was seen but ashes.

One more lover who had played the fool! Yet two more were to come and the Princess wondered, "what next?"

The fourth lover was named High Lord. He was a great boaster, but a coward also. He gave big sums of money to his hired men and told them to go off into distant lands and never come back till they brought to him the jewel of many colors from a dragon's neck.

So sure of winning the Princess was this coward and boaster, that he built a splendid palace to put his wife in, when he should get her. It was full of rich and rare woods and brocade curtains. Even the ceilings of the rooms were made of silken threads. A thousand skeins of many bright colors were used.

Yet a whole year passed and none of his men came back bringing the dragon jewel; for they had gone off and spent all his money. So High Lord went on a ship to inquire where dragon jewels could be bought or found, but a big storm coming on he grew very seasick. Finally, when on shore, he was in such a fright and had caught

such a heavy cold that his eyes bulged out until they looked as if a plum had been fastened on his face, beneath each eye. He had lost all his money, so he had to travel back on foot. When he got home, footsore and weary, he never went near the Princess. He liked people to think he had secured the dragon jewel, but they did not believe him. Behind his back they winked their eyes at each other. Then they laughingly said that the only jewels he brought back were plum jewels.

So in old Japan, when people wanted a joke on any one who had failed, they said "he brought home the plum jewel." As for the splendid palace he had built, no one lived in it and in time it fell to pieces and the black crows used the silk of the ceilings to make their nests.

The fifth lover, who was to find the strange sea-shell which the swallows hide in their nests, sent his men to search on all the nests that had been built in or near the smoke holes, which take the place of flues or chimneys, in Japanese kitchens.

But not one shell could any of the twenty men discover. So in hot anger the lord went out to find one for himself. He had ropes and pulleys brought and then had himself hoisted up in a basket to the smoke hole. When he put his hand into a swallow's nest it was dark but he felt some-



thing. So, calling out, "I've got it," he gave orders to his men to lower him down.

Most lustily they began to pull but the rope broke and he was nearly killed by the fall. When he came to his senses, he called for a candle, but found that what was in his hand was only a piece of hard dirt. At home, he nearly died of shame and disgrace.

The Princess, hearing of his trouble, sent him her sympathy in a poem. He was just able to write back, thanking her, but soon became weak unto death and passed away.

Being now well rid of all her lovers, the Princess used to sit night after night looking at the moon. When it was full and round, she would stretch out her arms, beckon with her hands or shade her eyes and gaze long and eagerly as if she saw some one in that bright jewel land in the bright sky.

Even the Mikado heard of the beautiful girl and suddenly visiting the house, tried to catch hold of her dress and pull her away; but strange to say, she vanished out of his sight as if melted in a mist.

Next morning she took on her old shape and form and told her foster parents the full story of who she was and how, for some offence, her father had banished her from the moon to the earth for a term of years. Twenty of these had now

passed away and the King of Moon Land was coming for her.

She was sad at leaving her kind earthly father and mother and the friends, who loved her, but she must obey her royal parents, whose messengers would soon be at hand in a chariot and with an army of warriors. She really wanted to stay another year on earth, to comfort the old man and his wife, but the message of the Moon King she knew would be "come at once."

When this was told the old man, he cried out, "No, no, I'll shoot any one who tries to take you away." So he kept guard at the gate, while her mother inside the house held the Princess tight in her arms.

On hearing the news, the Mikado gave orders to ten thousand of his trusty soldiers to stand guard on roof and wall and in the garden, and shoot at anything coming down from the skies.

But it was in vain that the old man and the warriors boasted. She said that they were foolish to try to keep her.

It was near midnight, when they ceased talking. Then suddenly it grew bright as noonday, as if ten moons were shining. An army of men in glistening robes appeared; but when the Mikado's soldiers tried to shoot at them, their fingers became numb and they were not able to draw their bows. As for the old man, he fell

down as if dead and the old woman dropped with face down on the mats.

“Come forth out of this wretched hut,” cried the leader of the moon host to the Princess. “How can you live in such a filthy hole?”

Forthwith, a golden chariot, that seemed to have wings, rolled up to the door and one of the moon men handed her a vial containing the elixir of life. This was to purify her body from the taint of earth. Of this she took a swallow and put some in her inner clothing.

Then, taking off her robe of brocade, she gave it to the old man as a keepsake, while one of the moon fairies handed her a shining dress with wings. Before putting it on, she wrote a letter to the Mikado full of thanks and regrets at leaving him, making him a present of the elixir. Those who swallowed the liquid were believed to live forever.

Then, having put on her robe of feathers from Moon Land, she gave the word and in a moment the chariot rose to the clouds and her train of shining armies followed her.

But so full of grief were both the old man and his wife, and even the Mikado, that none even tasted the elixir, for they forgot everything but their sorrow. So in time all died.

But the Mikado had ordered his men to find out which of the mountains of Japan was the



highest, and therefore nearest to Heaven. At the top, they were to burn this medicine of long life, for the smoke would ever benefit his people.

So they set forth and found a snow-white mountain, Fujiyama, and kindling a fire on the top, burnt both the letter and the deathless elixir.

This is the reason why, even to this day, one sees the smoke rising from the Deathless Mountain, as they call it Fujiyama.

Often has the story-teller heard men warmly debating whether men who write its name in Chinese letters should make Fuji mean "Rich in Soldiers," or "No Two Such," or "Without a Match," or "No Second"; because the Princess Moonbeam will never a second time visit the earth.

Yet no people spend more time in enjoying the sight of the full moon than the Japanese. Many a house has a Moon Viewing Chamber, while the children hope the Princess of the Fluffy Bamboo will come back to earth.

## X

### BENKÉI AND THE BELL

**O**N one of the hills overlooking the blue sky's mirror of Lake Biwa, stands the ancient monastery of Miidera which was founded over twelve hundred years ago, by the pious Mikado Tenchi.

Near the entrance, on a platform constructed of stoutest timbers, stands a bronze bell five and a half feet high. It has on it none of the writing so commonly found on Japanese bells, and though its surface is covered with scratches it was once as brilliant as a mirror. This wonderful old bell is visited by thousands of people from all parts of Japan who come to wonder at it, for it has a great story to tell.

Over two thousand years ago, say the priests, it hung in a temple in India which Buddha himself built. After his death it got into the possession of the Dragon King, who gave it to the hero, Toda, as we shall see. Not being able to remove it, he presented it to the monks at Miidera. With great labor it was brought to the hilltop and hung in this belfry where it rang out

every morning and evening, filling the lake and hillsides with sweet melody. Its surface was as smooth and shiny as a looking-glass.

Now it was one of the rules of the Buddhists that no woman should be allowed to ascend the hill or enter the monastery of Miidera. The foolish priests believed that if a woman should enter the door, an evil spirit, also, would slip in at the same time. This was why they made such a severe rule.

But this only made a pretty woman in Kioto want to see it the more. Hearing of the polished face of the bell, this famous beauty resolved to ascend the hill to dress her hair and powder her face in the mirror-like surface. She chose an hour when she knew the priests would be too busy at study of the sacred books to notice her, then she ascended the hill and entered the belfry. Looking into the smooth surface, she saw her own sparkling eyes, her cheeks flushed rosy with exercise, her dimples playing, and then her whole form reflected as in her own silver mirror, before which she daily sat. Charmed as much by the largeness as the brilliancy of the reflection, she stretched forth her hand, and touching her finger-tips to the bell prayed aloud that she might possess just such a mirror of equal size and brightness.

But the bell was outraged at the impiety of



the woman's touch, and the cold metal shrank back, leaving a hollow place, and spoiling the even surface of the bell. From that time forth the bell gradually lost its polish, and became dull and finally dark, like other bells.

When big Benkéi was a monk, belonging to another monastery, he was possessed of a mighty desire to steal this bell. So one night he went over to Miidera hill, cautiously crept up to the belfry and unhooked the bell from the great iron link which held it. How to get the heavy thing down the mountain was now the question.

Should he let it roll down, the monks at Miidera would hear it bumping over the stones. Nor could he carry it in his arms, for being sixteen feet round, it was too big for him to grasp and hold despite his own huge strength. He could not put his head in it like a candle in a snuffer, for then he would not be able to see his way down.

So climbing into the belfry he pulled out the cross-beam with the iron link, and hanging on the bell put the beam on his shoulder to carry it like a pair of scales.

The next difficulty was to balance it, for he had nothing but his paper lantern to hang on the other end of the beam to balance the bell. It was a prodigiously hard task to carry his burden

six or seven miles. It was "trying to balance a bronze bell with a paper lantern," for Benkéi's feat has passed into a proverb.

The work made him puff and blow and sweat until he was as hungry as a badger, but he finally succeeded in hooking it up in the belfry at his own monastery.

Then all his fellow priests got up, though at night, to welcome him. They admired his bravery and strength and wished to strike the bell at once to show their joy.

"No, I won't lift a hammer or sound a note till you make me some soup. I am terribly hungry," said Benkéi, as he sat down on a cross-piece of the belfry and wiped his forehead with his cowl.

So the priests got out the iron soup-pot, five feet in diameter, and kindling a fire made a huge mess of soup and served it to Benkéi. The lusty monk sipped bowl after bowl of the steaming nourishment until the pot was empty.

"Now," said he, "you may sound the bell."

Five or six of the young priests mounted the platform and seized the rope that held a heavy log suspended from the roof. The manner of striking the bell was to pull back the log several feet, then let go the rope, holding the wood after the rebound.

At the first stroke the bell quivered and rolled

out a most mournful and solemn sound which as it softened and died away changed into the distinct murmur:

“I want to go back to Miidera! I want to go back to Miidera! I want to go-o ba-a-ck to-o M-i-i-de-ra-ra-a-a-a!”

“Just listen to that!” said the priests. “What a strange bell. It wants to go back. It is not satisfied with our ringing.”

“Ah! I know what is the matter,” said the aged abbot. “It must be sprinkled with holy water. Then it will be happy with us. Ho! page, bring hither the deep sea-shell full of sacred water!”

So the pure white shell full of the consecrated water was brought, together with the holy man’s brush. Dipping it in the water the abbot sprinkled the bell inside and out.

“I dedicate thee, oh, bell, to our service. Now strike,” said he, signaling to the bell-pullers.

Again the young men mounted the platform, drew back the log with a lusty pull and let fly.

“Miidera! I want to go back to Miidera!” moaned out the homesick bell.

This so enraged Benkéi that he rushed to the rope, waved the monks aside, and seizing the rope strained every muscle to jerk the beam its entire length afield, and then let fly with force enough to crack the bell. For a moment the dense



volume of sound filled the ears of all like a storm, but as the vibrations died away, the bell whined out:

“Miidera! I want to go back to M-ii-de-ra!”

Whether struck at morning, noon or night the bell said the same words. No matter when, by whom, how hard or how gently it was struck, the bell moaned the one plaint as if crying, “I want to go back to Miidera!” “I want to go back to Miidera!”

At last Benkéi in a rage unhooked the bell, shouldered it beam and all, and set off to take it back. Carrying the bell to the top of the mountain, he set it down, and giving it a kick rolled it down the valley toward Miidera, and left it there. Then the Miidera priests found it and hung it up again. Since that time the bell has completely changed its note, until now it is just like other bells in sound and behavior.

## XI

### LITTLE SILVER'S DREAM

**L**ITTLE SILVER was a girl who did not care for strange stories of animals, so much as for those of wonder-creatures in the form of human beings. Even of these, however, she did not like to dream, and when the foolish old nurse would tell her ghost stories at night, she was terribly afraid they would appear to her in her sleep.

To avoid this, the old nurse told her to draw pictures of a tapir on the sheet of white paper which was wrapped around her tiny pillow. These small pillows, you must know, are used by every Japanese girl in order to keep her well-dressed hair from being mussed or rumpled. The nurse told her what many old folks believe,—that if you have a picture of a tapir under the bed, or on the paper pillow-case, you will not have unpleasant dreams, as the tapir is said to eat them. So strongly do some people believe this that they sleep under quilts figured with the device of this long-snouted beast. If in spite of this precaution one should have a bad dream, he

must cry out on awaking, "Tapir, come eat, tapir, come eat!" Then the tapir will swallow the dream, and no evil results will happen to the dreamer.

Little Silver listened with open mouth to this account of the tapir, and then making the picture and wrapping it around her pillow, she fell asleep. I suspect that the red rice of which she had eaten so heartily at supper time, until her waist strings tightened, had something to do with her travels in dreamland.

She thought she had gone down to Osaka, and there got on a junk and sailed far away to the southwest, through the Inland Sea. That night the waters seemed full of white ghosts of men and women. Some of them were walking on, and in, the water. Some were running about. Here and there groups appeared to be talking together. Once in a while the junk would run against one of them; and when Little Silver looked to see if he were hurt or knocked over, she could see nothing until the junk passed by, when the ghost would appear standing in the same place, as though the ship had gone through empty air.

Occasionally a ghost would come up to the side of the ship, and in a squeaky voice ask for a dipper. While she would be wondering what a ghost wanted to do with a dipper, a sailor would quietly open a locker, take out a dipper having



no bottom, and give one every time he was asked for them. Little Silver noticed a large bundle of these dippers ready. The ghosts would then begin to bail up water out of the sea to empty it in the boat. All night they followed the junk, holding on with one hand to the gunwale, while they vainly dipped up water with the other, trying to swamp the boat. If dippers with bottoms in them had been given them, the sailors said, the boat would have been sunk. When daylight appeared the shadowy host of people vanished.

In the morning they passed an island, the shores of which were high rocks of red coral. A great earthen jar stood on the beach, and around it lay long-handled ladles holding a half-gallon or more, and piles of very large shallow red-lacquered wine cups, which seemed as big as the full moon. After the sun had risen some time, there came down from over the hills a troop of the most curious looking people. Many were short, little wizened-faced folks, who looked very old; or rather, they seemed old before they ought to be. Some were very aged and crooked, with hickory-nut faces, and hair of a reddish gray tint. All the others had long scarlet locks hanging loose over their heads, and streaming down their backs. Their faces were flushed as if by hard drinking, and their pimpled noses resembled huge red barnacles. No sooner did they arrive at the

great earthen jar than they ranged themselves round it. The old ones dipped out ladles full, and drank of the wine till they reeled. The younger ones poured the liquor into cups and drank. Even the little infants guzzled quantities of the yellow saké<sup>1</sup> from the shallow cups.

Then began the dance, and wild and furious it grew. The leather-faced old sots tossed their long reddish-gray locks in the air, and pirouetted round the big saké jar. The younger ones of all ages clapped their hands, knotted their handkerchiefs over their foreheads, waved their dippers or cups or fans, and practiced all kinds of antics, while their scarlet hair streamed in the wind or was blown in their eyes. The dance over, they threw down their cups and dippers, rested a few minutes and then took another heavy drink all around.

“Now to work!” shouted an old fellow whose face was redder than his half-bleached hair, and who having only two teeth looked just like an imp. As for his wife, her teeth had long ago fallen out and the skin of her face seemed to have added a pucker for every year since a half century had rolled over her head.

Then Little Silver looked and saw them scatter. Some gathered shells and burned them to make lime. Others carried water and made mortar,

<sup>1</sup> A yellow wine made from rice.

which they thickened by a pulp made of paper, and a glue made by boiling fish skin. Some dived under the sea for red coral, which they hauled up by means of straw ropes, in great sprigs as thick as the branches of a tree. They quickly ran up a scaffold, and while some of the scarlet-headed plasterers smeared the walls, others below passed up the tempered mortar on long shell shovels, to the hand mortar-boards. Even at work they had casks and cups of saké at hand, while children played in the empty kegs and licked the gummy sugar left in some of them.

“What is that house for?” asked Little Silver of the sailors.

“Oh, that is the storehouse in which the King of the Demons lays up all the treasures of life and health and happiness and property, which men throw away or exchange for the saké he gives them. This is what they lose by making funnels of themselves.”

“Oh, yes,” said Little Silver to herself, as she remembered how her father had said of a certain neighbor who had lately been drinking hard, “He swills saké like a Demon.”

She also understood why picnic or “chow-chow” boxes were often decorated with pictures of these imps, with their cups and dippers. For, at these picnics, many men get drunk; so much so indeed, that after a while the master of the



feast orders very poor and cheap wine to be served to the guests. He also replaces the delicate wine cups of eggshell porcelain, with big thick teacups or wooden bowls, for the guests when drunk are liable to shatter the others. Besides they do not know the difference.

She also now understood why it was commonly said of a Mr. Matsu, who had once been very rich but was now a poor sot, "His property has all gone to the Demons."

Just then the ship in which she was sailing struck a rock, and the sudden jerk woke up Little Silver, who cried out, "Tapir, come eat; tapir, come eat!"

No tapir came that she could see, but if he had appeared I fear Little Silver would have been more frightened than she was by her dream of the ghosts; for, the next morning, she laughed to think how they had all their work a-dipping water for nothing. But she never forgot the Demon's treasure-house of lost gold and happiness, whenever she saw any one drinking more saké than was good for him.

## XII

### THE MAGIC FROG

**O**NCE upon a time there was a great lord who lived in the Island of the Nine Provinces. He had but one son, a bright little fellow whom the people in admiration nicknamed "Young Thunder." During one of the civil wars, the lord's castle was taken, and he was slain; but by the aid of a servant the boy escaped and fled northward to a neighboring province, where he lived until he grew up to manhood.

For many years the province had been infested with robbers who grew bolder and bolder. One day the faithful servant of Young Thunder was attacked, whereupon he made resistance and was slain by the robbers. The young man now left alone in the world led a wandering life in various parts of the Sunrise Kingdom.

All this time he was consumed with the desire to revive the name of his father, and restore the fortunes of his family. He was exceedingly brave, and an expert swordsman, but his early misfortunes had made him an enemy of the law. So he became chief of a band of robbers, plun-

dered many wealthy merchants, and in a short time was rich in men, arms, and booty. He was accustomed to disguise himself as a beggar, or priest, or traveling tinker, and go in person into the houses of men of wealth, and thus learn all about their gates and guards, where they slept, and in what rooms their treasures were stored, so that success was easy.

Hearing of an old man who lived in the highlands, he started to rob him, and for this purpose put on the disguise of a pilgrim. But before he reached there a great snow-storm forced him to take refuge in a humble house by the way. Entering, he found a beautiful woman, who treated him with great kindness. This, however, did not change the robber's wicked nature. At midnight, when all was still, he unsheathed his sword, and going noiselessly to her room, he found the lady absorbed in reading.

Lifting his sword, he was about to strike at her neck, when, in a flash, her body changed into that of a very old man, who seized the heavy steel blade and broke it in pieces as though it were a stick. Then he tossed the bits of steel away, and thus spoke to the robber who stood amazed but fearless:

“I am a man of magic power, and I have lived in these mountains many hundred years, though my true body is that of a huge frog. I





He also learned how to govern the frogs.





can easily put you to death, but I have another purpose. So I shall pardon you and teach you magic instead. But first you must promise to cease following your evil life."

Then the youth bowed his head to the floor, acknowledged his crimes to the old man, and begged to be received as his pupil. Thus it came about that he dwelt with the magician for several weeks, learned all the arts of the mountain spirits; how to cause a storm of wind and rain, and to make a deluge, and to control the elements at will.

He also learned how to govern the frogs, and at his bidding they assumed gigantic size, so that on their backs he could stand up and cross rivers and carry enormous loads.

When the old man had finished instructing him he said, "Henceforth cease from robbing, or in any way injuring the poor. Take from the wicked rich, and those who acquire money dishonestly, but help the needy and the suffering." Thus speaking, the old man turned into a huge frog and hopped away.

What this old mountain spirit bade him do, was just what Young Thunder wished. For you must know, this was in early days before there was much law or order, and people had to protect themselves as best they could. So the young man set out on his journey with a light heart.



“I can now make the storm and the waters obey me, and all the frogs are at my command,” he said; “but alas! the magic of the frog cannot control that of the serpent. I shall have to beware of his poison.”

From that time forth the oppressed poor people rejoiced whenever avaricious merchants and extortionate money lenders lost their treasures. For when a poor farmer, whose crops failed, could not pay his rent or loan, on the date promised, these hard-hearted money-lenders would turn him out of his house, seize his beds, mats, and rice-tub, and even the shrine and images on the god-shelf, to sell them at auction for a trifle, to their minions, who resold them at a high price for the money-lender, who thus got a double benefit. But whenever a miser was robbed, the people said, “The Young Thunder has struck,” and then they were glad. In this manner his name soon became the poor people’s watchword in those troublous times.

Yet he was always ready to help the innocent and honest, even if they were rich. One day a merchant was sentenced to death, though he was really not guilty. Young Thunder, hearing of it, went to the magistrate and said that he himself was the very man who had committed the robbery. So the man’s life was saved, and Young Thunder was hanged on a large oak tree.

But during the night, his body changed into a bullfrog which hopped away out of sight, and off into the mountains.

At this time, a young and beautiful maiden lived in the mountain district. Her character was very lovely. She was always obedient to her parents and kind to her friends. Her daily task was to go to the mountains and cut brushwood for fuel. One day while thus busy, singing at the task, she met a very old man, with a long white beard sweeping his breast, who said to her:

“Do not fear me. I have lived in this mountain many hundred years, but my real body is that of a snail. I will teach you the powers of magic, so that you can walk on the sea, or cross a river however swift and deep, as though it were dry land.”

Gladly the maiden took daily lessons of the old man, and soon was able to walk on the waters as if they were the mountain paths. One day the old man said, “I shall now leave you and resume my former shape. Use your power to destroy the wicked robbers. Help those who defend the poor. I advise you to marry the famous warrior, Young Thunder, and unite your powers with his.”

Thus saying, the old man shriveled up into a snail and crawled away.

“ I am glad,” said the maiden to herself, “ for the magic of the snail can overcome that of the serpent. If Young Thunder, who has the magic of the frog, should marry me, we could then destroy the son of the serpent, the terrible robber, Dragon-coil.”

By good fortune, Young Thunder soon met the maiden, and being charmed with her beauty, and knowing her power of magic, he sent a messenger with presents to her parents, asking them to give him their daughter to wife. The parents agreed, and so the young and loving couple were married.

Hitherto when Young Thunder had wished to cross a river, he had changed himself into a frog and swam across; or he had summoned a bullfrog before him, which increased in size until it was as large as an elephant. Then standing erect on its back, he had reached the opposite shore in safety. Now with his wife's powers the two walked over the waters as though the surface were a hard floor.

Soon after their marriage, war broke out in Japan between two famous clans. To help them fight their battles, and capture the castles of their enemies, one family besought the aid of Young Thunder, who agreed to serve them and carried their banner. Their enemies then secured the services of Dragon-coil.



This Dragon-coil was a dangerous and wicked robber whose father was a man, and whose mother was a serpent that lived at the bottom of a lake. He was perfectly skilled in the magic of the serpent, and by spurting venom on his enemies could destroy the strongest warriors. Collecting thousands of followers, he made great ravages in all parts of Japan, robbing and murdering good and bad, rich and poor alike. Loving war and destruction, he was glad to join forces with one of the fighting clans.

Now that the magic of the frog and snail was joined to one army, and the magic of the serpent aided the other, the conflicts were bloody and terrible, lasting through many years, and many men were slain on both sides.

On one occasion, after a hard-fought battle, Young Thunder fled and took refuge in a monastery, with a few trusty vassals, to rest a short time. In this retreat a lovely princess was dwelling. She had fled from Dragon-coil, who wished her for his bride. She did not want to marry the son of a serpent, and hoped to escape him. She lived in fear of him continually. Dragon-coil, hearing at one time that both Young Thunder and the princess were at this place, changed himself into a serpent, and distilling a large mouthful of poison, crawled up to the ceiling in the room where Young Thunder lay sleep-

ing, and reaching a spot directly over him poured the venom on his head. The fumes of the poison stupefied him and all his followers. Dragon-coil then changed into a man and seized the princess and made off with her.

Gradually the faithful retainers awoke from their stupor to find their master delirious and near the point of death, and the princess gone.

“What can we do to restore our dear master to life?” This was the question each one asked of the others, as with sorrowful faces and weeping eyes they gazed at his pallid form. They called in the venerable abbot of the monastery to see if he could suggest what might be done.

“Alas!” said the aged priest, “there is no medicine in Japan to cure your lord’s disease; but in India there is an elixir which is a sure antidote. If we could get that, the master would recover.”

“Alas! alas!” and a chorus of groans showed that all hope had fled, for the mountain in India, where the elixir was made, lay many hundred miles from Japan.

Just then a youth, one of the pages of Young Thunder, arose to speak. He was but fourteen years old, and was a servant out of gratitude, for Young Thunder had rescued his father from many dangers and saved his life. He begged permission to say a word to the abbot, who, see-

ing the lad's eager face, motioned to him with his fan to speak.

"How long can our lord live?" asked the youth.

"He will be dead in thirty hours," answered the abbot, with a sigh.

"If you will give me leave to go, I will procure the medicine, and if our master is still living when I come back, he will get well."

Now this young page had learned magic and sorcery from the Tengus, or long-nosed elves of the mountains, and could fly high in the air with incredible swiftness. Speaking a few words of incantation, he put on the wings of a Tengu, mounted a white cloud and rode on the east wind to India. He bought the elixir of the mountain spirits, and returned to Japan in one day and a night.

Although Young Thunder was about to expire, at the first touch of the elixir to his face he drew a deep breath, perspiration glistened on his forehead, and in a few moments more he sat up.

Soon he was well, and being now immune to the serpent's poison, he fought a great battle against Dragon-coil and at last killed him. The princess was rescued and restored to her parents. For his brave deeds, Young Thunder was pardoned for all his misdeeds and his father's estate was restored to him. There with his lovely wife



he spent his remaining days in quiet and peace. They abjured magic, and instead reared a family of noble sons and daughters. Their name was known with love and honor in all Japan.

## XIII

### THE THOUSAND-FACED JEWEL

**I**T was more centuries ago than one can count on his fingers, when a wedding took place between a princess of Japan and the Chinese emperor. The name of the bride's father was Tan Kai Ko.

The Japanese lady in China collected many precious objects and sent them over to her native country. Among these treasures was a most precious jewel, which was beyond all price. It was a globe of crystal, containing the face and image of the Lord Buddha, whom men of eastern Asia worshipped. Its fame had reached the distant islands of Japan.

The wonder of this jewel was that no matter which way the crystal ball was turned, even in a thousand ways, there was seen the face of the holy Buddha. So it was named the Thousand-Faced Jewel. Of old, it had been brought all the way from India to China. All Japan now rejoiced to have such an honor bestowed and that so precious a token was on its way across the seas to the Mikado's Empire.

But alas! the ship that was to bring it to Japan struck on a rock and was wrecked and the jewel sank down, down to the bottom of the sea. There the terrible dragons, that guard the shrine of the King of the World Under the Sea, seized it and brought it to their master.

Now as many ships were wrecked, or lost at sea in storms, and their cargoes sank beneath the waves, this king of the Ocean Under World had amassed countless treasures. Yet above them all, he accounted this Thousand-Faced Jewel as most precious. He set it in the strongest part of his castle at the bottom of the sea and appointed four dragons to guard it every minute.

Far up on the earth, in the world of sunshine, Tan Kai Ko, the noble father of the bride, mourned for the lost jewel and made resolve to get it back. Going down to the seashore, he picked out the most famous girl diver, named Shin-ju, which means pearl, who was not afraid to dive into the deepest sea. After living with the fisher folk three years, he told her the story of the lost gem. The brave woman was at once fired with a desire to regain the jewel, for she loved the nobleman more than her own life.

Among the fisherman and divers on the coasts of Japan, few among the men can excel the young fisher girls, who are like mermaids in diving deep and staying long under water. Opening their



eyes, when beneath the waves, they can find what they seek.

So having great promises made to her, Shin-ju got herself ready to make the plunge far down into the deep sea. In spite of dragons and the great depth, she declared she would bring back the Thousand-Faced Jewel or die.

On his part, Tan Kai Ko went first up to Kyoto and borrowed the Mikado's band to make music. This was to attract the dragons away from the shrine of Riu Giu, in the World Beneath the Sea, up to the surface of the earth. He also secured a light-giving crystal ball, which the diver girl was to put into her hair with which to light her path like a lamp beneath the waters.

On her part, the diver got her father and brother to make a very long rope and coil it in the boat. Choosing a sunshiny day, the boat was rowed out to sea and then she tied the rope around her waist ready to dive. She grasped in her hand the long, flat two-edged knife with which she was wont to cut off the awabi, or sea slugs, from the rocks underneath the sea. Her boat was nearly a mile distant from that of the musicians.

The band of music now began to play, and a few minutes after she made the plunge down, down, under the sparkling waves and disappeared from sight.

At first nothing unusual was seen or heard,

while the music went on. It was not long, however, before here and there, on the right hand and the left, one could see the noses and fiery eyes of the dragons. They peered above the waves to see and hear what was going on. The monsters swam around the boat and played and frisked about it as if delighted with the sweet sounds.

All this time the Shin-ju, the Ama, or diving girl, who had fastened the light-giving crystal in her front hair and stuck the knife in her belt, was far down below in the water. She had nothing on but her apron of straw. Having given the signal to her brothers to hold the rope, she leaped from the boat down, down, down, neath the sparkling waves. On, on, down, down, sinking in the deeps upon deeps, she dived, until she came to the glittering palaces, pagodas and temples which belonged to the King of the World Under the Sea.

These were too splendid to tell about in full, for they were built of Shippo, or the Seven Famous Jewels. These were, in their order, pink coral, amber, mother-of-pearl, emerald, agate, pearls, crystal, and were set in gold and silver. Oh, how they did sparkle and shine!

But the Ama cared little for these things at which, at another time, she would have been lost in wonder. What she cared most for was the

Thousand-Faced Jewel which she saw was kept in the innermost shrine.

Happily the dragons, lured away by the music above, were away. So climbing over the wall, she came near the coveted prize which almost blinded her by its rays of dazzling light. Snatching the jewel, she jerked the rope, as a signal to her father and brothers, to pull her up.

By this time the chief dragon, beginning to suspect mischief, snorted to his fellow dragons to return to Riu Giu and guard the shrine. Swiftly they swam down, only to discover the jewel gone!

At once they guessed that the diving girl had taken it, and instantly they all started off in pursuit. By the lashing of the waves into foam, the brothers in the boat guessed that their sister was being chased by the dragons. So, with all their might and main, they tugged on the rope to pull her up. Would the dragons catch and devour her? How the sweat drops fell from their foreheads as they pulled! Even the nobleman, Tan Kai Ko, who was in the boat, helped to coil the long rope.

But no one could be braver than that diving girl. Although the swiftest dragon was close to her and she was likely to be swallowed up, she knew, what all Japanese fisher maids believe, that no dragon will touch a dead body. That is



the reason why, when people are drowned, unless the fishes eat up their bodies, they float ashore. For the King of the World Under the Sea and his dragons have a horror of dead bodies and will not touch a corpse.

So the Ama, brave girl, leered at the fiery dragon coming after her, as much as to say, "You think you are going to get me, and the jewel too, don't you? But you are mistaken."

Then she held up the Thousand-Faced Jewel to taunt the dragon and dared him to come on.

Meanwhile, the men in the boat could see nothing, nor could they tell what was going on beneath. The rope was so very long, and it took much time to hoist the girl into the boat, that they were almost ready to faint. The father feared for his daughter and the brothers for their sister, while the nobleman's heart beat hard as he thought that both the girl and the jewel might be lost from him forever.

Just when the foremost dragon was within a few feet of her, the girl shook the jewel almost in his face. Then, plunging her knife into her body, below her heart, she thrust the jewel into her flesh and up under her ribs, dying in a moment, and her red blood clouding the water and blinding the dragons.

At sight and odor of human blood, with horror at a dead body, the dragons, one and all, angry

and in bad temper at losing their prey, swam away and reported their failure to the king.

What was the sorrow and dismay of father, brothers and the nobleman to pull up a corpse! Hope was turned into mourning and loud wailing took the place of the strains of music. For, out of respect for their grief, the musicians ceased playing. Laying a mat over the body of their sister and covering it up, the brothers rowed ashore and prepared for the burial.

But when arranging her limbs and long hair in the white shroud of the dead, they noticed a gash in the left side of their sister's body, and on pressing the edges, out rolled the Thousand-Faced Jewel, dazzling all with its flashing rays of light and for a moment nearly blinding those who stood near.

Overjoyed at such devotion, the nobleman reared a glorious monument which had an inscription recounting the brave deed of Shin-ju, the Ama. Tan Kai Ko's descendants were for generations nobles at Court and long was the tale told of Ama, the brave rescuer of the Thousand-Faced Jewel.

## XIV

### HOW THE JELLY-FISH LOST HIS SHELL

**I**N the days of old, the Jelly-fish was one of the retainers in waiting upon the Queen of the World under the Sea. In those days he had a shell, and as his head was hard, no one dared to insult him, or stick him with their horns, or pinch him with their claws, or scratch him with their nails, or brush rudely by him with their fins. In short, this fish instead of being a lump of jelly, as white and helpless as a pudding, as we see him now, was a lordly fellow that could get his back up and keep it high when he wished to. He waited on the Queen and right proud was he of his office. He was on good terms with the King's Dragon, which often allowed him to play with his scaly tail, but never hurt him in the least.

One day the Queen fell sick, and every hour grew worse. The King became anxious, and her subjects talked about nothing else but her sickness. There was grief all through the water-world; from the mermaids on their bed of sponge, and the dragons in the rocky caverns, down to the



tiny gudgeons in the rivers, that were considered no more than mere bait. The jolly Cuttle-fish stopped playing his drums and guitar, folded his six arms and hid away moping in his hole. His servant the Lobster in vain lighted his candle at night, and tried to induce him to come out of his lair. The dolphins and porpoises wept tears, but the clams, oysters, and limpets shut up their shells and did not even wiggle. The flounders and skates lay flat on the ocean's floor, never even lifting up their noses. The Squid wept a great deal of ink, and the Jelly-fish nearly melted to pure water. The Tortoise was patient and offered to do anything for the relief of the Queen.

But nothing could be done. The Cuttle-fish who professed to be "a kind of a" doctor, offered the use of all his cups to suck out the poison, if that were the trouble.

But it wasn't. It was internal, and nothing but medicine that could be swallowed would reach the disease.

At last some one suggested that the liver of a Monkey would be a specific for the royal sickness, and it was resolved to try it. The Tortoise, who was the Queen's messenger, because he could live on both land and water, swim or crawl, was summoned. He was told to go upon earth to a certain mountain, catch a monkey and bring him alive to the Under-world.

Off started the Tortoise on his journey to the earth, and going to a mountain where the monkeys lived, squatted down at the foot of a tree and pretended to be asleep though keeping his claws and tail out. There he waited patiently, well knowing that curiosity and the monkey's love of tricks would bring one within reach of his talons. Pretty soon, a family of chattering monkeys came running along among the branches overhead, when suddenly a young fellow caught sight of the sleeping Tortoise.

"Is it possible?" said the long-handed fellow; "here's fun! Let's tickle the old fellow's back and pull his tail."

All agreed, and forthwith a dozen monkeys, joining hand over hand, made a long ladder of themselves until they just reached the Tortoise's back. They didn't use their tails, for Japanese monkeys have none, except stumps two inches long. However, he who was to be the tail end of this living rope, when all was ready, crawled along and slipped over the whole line, whispering as he slid:

"'Sh! don't chatter or laugh, you'll wake him up."

Now the Monkey expected to hold on the living pendulum by one long hand, and swinging down with the other, to pull the Tortoise's tail, and see how near he could come to his snout

without being snapped up. For he well knew that a tortoise could neither jump off its legs nor climb a tree.

One! Two! The monkey pendulum swung back and forth without touching.

Three! Four! The Monkey's finger-nails scratched the Tortoise's back. Yet old Hard Shell pretended to be sound asleep.

Five! Six! The Monkey caught hold of the Tortoise's tail and jerked it hard. Old Tortoise now moved out its head a little, as if still only half awake.

Seven! Eight! This time the Monkey intended to pull the Tortoise's head, when just as he came within reach, the Tortoise snapped him, held him in his claws, and as the monkey pendulum swung back he lost his hold. In an instant he was jerked loose, and fell head-foremost to the ground, half stunned.

Frightened at the loss of their end link, the other monkeys of the chain wound themselves up like a windlass over the branches, and squatting on the trees, set up a doleful chattering.

"Now," said the Tortoise, "I want you to go with me. If you don't, I'll eat you up. Get on my back and I'll carry you; but I must hold your paw in my mouth so you will not try to run away."

Half frightened to death, the Monkey obeyed,



and the Tortoise trotted off to the sea, swam to the spot over the Queen's palace, and in a flip of the finger was down in the gardens of the Under World.

The Queen hearing of the Monkey's arrival thanked the Tortoise, and commanded her cook and baker to feed him well and treat him kindly, for the Queen felt really sorry because he was to lose his liver.

As for the unsuspecting Monkey he enjoyed himself very much, and ran around everywhere amusing the star-fishes, clams, oysters, and other pulpy creatures that could not run, by his rapid climbing of the rocks and coral bushes, and by rolling over the sponge beds and cutting all manner of antics. They had never before seen anything like it. Poor fellow! he would not have been so frolicsome if he had known what was in store for him.

All this time however the Jelly-fish pitied him in his heart, and could hardly keep what he knew to himself. Seeing the Monkey in one of his gayest moods, the Jelly-fish squeezed up near him and said:

"Excuse my addressing you, but I feel very sorry for you because you are very soon to be put to death."

"Why?" said the Monkey. "What have I done?"

“Oh, nothing,” said the Jelly-fish, “only our Queen is sick and she wants your liver for medicine.”

Then if ever any one saw a sick looking monkey it was this one. As the Japanese still say, “His liver was smashed.” He felt dreadfully afraid. He put his hands over his eyes, and immediately began to plan how to save both life and liver!

After a while the clever fellow began to see a way out. Clapping his hand to his stomach he ran into the hall of the Queen’s palace and began to weep bitterly. Just then the Tortoise, passing by, saw his captive.

“What are you crying about?” he asked.

“Boohoo!” cried the Monkey. “When I left my home on the earth, I forgot to bring my liver with me, but hung it upon a tree, and now my liver will decay and I’ll die. Boohoo-hoo!” and the poor Monkey’s eyes became red as a fish’s and streamed with tears.

When the Tortoise told the Queen’s courtiers what the Monkey had said, their faces fell.

“Why, here’s a pretty piece of business! The Monkey is of no use without his liver. We must send him after it.”

So they dispatched the Tortoise to the earth again, the Monkey sitting a-straddle of his back. They came to the mountain again, and the Tor-

toise being a little lazy waited at the foot while the Monkey scampered off, saying he would be back in an hour. The two creatures had become so well acquainted that the old Hard Shell fully trusted the lively little fellow.

But instead of an hour the Tortoise waited till evening. No Monkey came. So finding himself fooled, and knowing all the monkeys would take the alarm, he waddled back and told the Queen all about it.

“Then,” said the Queen after reprimanding her messenger for his silly confidence, “the Monkey must have got wind of our intention to use his liver, and what is more, some one of my servants must have told him.”

So the Queen issued an order commanding all her subjects to appear before the Dragon-King of the World under the Sea. Whoever did this wicked thing, must be punished speedily.

Obedient to this command, the fish and sea animals of all sorts, that swam, crawled, rolled, or moved in any way, appeared before the Dragon-King, and his Queen—all except the Jelly-fish. This convinced the Queen that the Jelly-fish was the guilty one. She ordered the culprit to be brought into her presence, and before all her retainers, she cried out:

“You leaky-tongued wretch, for your crime of betraying the confidence of your sovereign, you



shall no longer remain among shell-fish. I condemn you to lose your shell."

Then she stripped off his shell, and left the poor Jelly-fish entirely naked and ashamed.

"Be off, you telltale!" she ended. "Hereafter all your children shall be as soft and defenceless as yourself."

The poor Jelly-fish blushed crimson, squeezed himself out, and swam off out of sight. Since that time all jelly-fishes have had no shells.

## XV

### LORD CUTTLE-FISH'S CONCERT

**D**ESPITE the loss of the Monkey's liver, the Queen of the World under the Sea, after careful attention and long rest, got well again, and was able to be about her duties and govern her kingdom. The news of her recovery created the wildest joy in the Under-world, and from tears and gloom and silence, the caves echoed with laughter, and the sponge-beds with music. Every one had on a "white face." Drums, flutes and banjos, which had been hung up on coral branches, or packed away in shell boxes, were taken down, or brought out, and right merrily were they thrummed. The pretty maids of the Queen put on their ivory thimble-nails, and the Queen again listened to the sweet melodies on the harp, while down among the smaller fry of fishy retainers and the scullions of the kitchen, were heard the constant thump of the shoulder-drum, the bang of the big drum, and the loud cries of the dancers as they struck all sorts of attitudes with hands, feet and head.

No allusion was openly made either to mon-

keys, tortoises, or jelly-fish. This would not have been polite. But the Jelly-fish, in a distant pool in the garden, could hear a merry mocking song which he felt to be directed against himself.

But none of these musical performances were worthy of the Queen's notice although as evidences of the joy of her subjects they did very well. A great many entertainments were gotten up to amuse the finny people, but the Queen was present at none of them except the one about to be described. How and why she became a spectator shall also be told.

One night the Queen was sitting in the pink drawing-room, arrayed in her queenly robes, for she was almost recovered and expected to walk out in the evening. Everything in the room, except a vase of green and golden colored sponge-plant, and a plume of glass-thread, was of a pink color. Then there was a pretty rockery made of a pyramid of pumice, full of embossed rosettes of living sea-anemones of scarlet, orange, gray, and black colors, which were trained to fold themselves up like an umbrella, or blossom out like chrysanthemums, at certain hours of the day, or when touched, behaving just like four o'clocks and sensitive plants.

All the furniture and hangings of the rooms were pink. The floor was made of mats woven from strips of mother-of-pearl, bound at the sides



with an inch border of pink coral. The ceiling was made of the rarest of pink shells wrought into flowers and squares. The walls were decorated with the same material, representing sea-scenes, jewels, and tortoise-shell patterns. In the alcove was a bouquet of seaweed of richest dyes, and in the nooks was an open cabinet holding several of the Queen's own treasures, such as a tiara which looked like woven threads of crystal and a toilet box and writing case made of solid pink coral. The gem of all was a screen having eight folds, on which were depicted her palace and throne-room, the visit of Toda, and the procession of the Queen, nobles, and grandees that escorted the brave archer, when he took his farewell to return to earth.

The Queen sat on the glistening sill of the wide window looking out over her gardens, her two maids sitting at her feet. Presently the sound of music wafted through the coral groves and crystal grottoes reached her ear.

"How wonderful this is!" exclaimed the Queen, half aloud. "What strange music is it I hear? It is neither guitar nor drum nor singing. It seems to be a mixture of all. Harken! It sounds as if a band with many instruments were playing, and a chorus were singing."

True enough! It was the most curious music ever heard in the Under-world, for to tell the

truth the voices were not in perfect accord, though all kept good time. The sound seemed to issue from the mansion of Lord Cuttle-fish, the palace physician. The Queen's curiosity was roused.

"I shall go and see what it is," said she, as she rose up. Then she recollected, and exclaimed: "Oh, no, it would not be proper for me to be seen in public at this hour of the evening, and if it is in Lord Cuttle-fish's mansion, I could not enter without a retinue. No, it would be beneath my dignity."

Curiosity, however, got the better of the Queen and off she started with only her two maids who held aloft over her head the long pearl-handled fans made of white shark's fins. She had decided to go incognito.

"Besides," thought she, "perhaps the concert is to be given outside, in the garden. If so, I can easily look down and from the great green rock that overlooks it see all that is going on, and my lord the King need not know of it."

The Queen walked over her pebbled garden walk, avoiding the great highroad. The sound of the drums and voices grew louder as she advanced, until when she reached the top of a green rock back of Lord Cuttle-fish's garden, the whole performance was open to her view.

It was so funny, and the Queen was so over-

come at the comical sight, that she nearly fell down in her merriment. She utterly forgot her dignity, and laughed till the tears ran down her face. She was so afraid she would scream out, that she nearly choked herself with her sleeve, while her alarmed maids, though meaning nothing by their acts but friendly help, slapped her on the back to give her breath. And this is what she saw.

There, at the top of a high green rock all covered with barnacles, on a huge tuft of sponge, sat Lord Cuttle-fish, playing on three musical instruments at once. His great speckled head, six feet high, like a huge bag upside down, was bent forward to read the notes of his music book by the light of a wax candle, which was stuck in the feelers of a prickly Lobster, and patiently held. Of his six pulpy arms one long one ran down like the trunk of an elephant, fingering along the pages of a music book. Two others were used to play the guitar. The small double drum was held by one arm on his shoulder and neck, while still another arm curled up in a bunch, punched it like a fist. Below him was a bass drum, set in a frame, and in his last arm was clutched a heavy drumstick which pounded out a tremendous noise. There the old fellow sat with his head bobbing, and all his six cuppy arms in motion, his rolling blue eyes ogling the notes,



and his mouth like an elephant's, screeching out the words of the song.

All this time, in front of Lord Cuttle-fish, sat the Lobster holding up the light, and nodding his head in time to the music.

But the audience, or rather the orchestra, was the funniest part of all. They could not be called listeners, for they were all performers. On the left was the lusty red-faced Bream with its gills wide open, singing at the top, or rather at the bottom, of its throat, and beating time by flapping its wide fins. A little Gudgeon, just behind silent and fanning itself with a blue flat fan, had disgracefully broken down on a high note. Next on the right was a long-nosed Gar-fish singing alto, and proud of its slender form. In the foreground squatted a great fat Frog with big bulging eyes, singing bass, and leading the choir by flapping his webbed fingers up and down, with his frightful cavern of a mouth wide open. Next, sat the stately and dignified Mackerel, rather scandalized at the whole affair, who kept very still, refusing to join in. At the Mackerel's right fin, squeaked out the stupid flat-headed Globe-fish with her big eye impolitely winking at the servant-maid just bringing in refreshments; for the truth was, all were very thirsty after so much vocal exercise.

Just behind the Herring, with one eye on Lord

Cuttle-fish and one on the coming refreshments, was the Skate. The truth must be told that the entire right wing of the orchestra was very much demoralized by the smell of the steaming tea and eatables just about to be served. The Tortoise though continuing to sing, impolitely turned its head away from Lord Cuttle-fish, and its back to the Frog that acted as precentor. The Sucker, though very homely and bloated with fat, kept on in the chorus, and pretended not to notice the waiter and the tray and cups. Indeed, Madame Sucker thought it quite vulgar in the Tortoise to be so eager after the cakes and wine.

Suddenly the music ceased to the relief of all the hungry ones. Lord Cuttle-fish kicked over his drum, unscrewed his guitar, and packed it away in his music box. He then slid along to the refreshment table, and actually amused the company by standing on his head and twirling his six cuppy arms around in the air like a wind-mill.

At this Miss Mackerel was quite shocked, and whispered under her fan to the Gar-fish, "It is quite undignified! What would the Queen say if she saw it?" not knowing that the Queen was looking on.

Then all sat down on their tails, propped upright on one fin, and produced their fans to cool themselves off. The Lobster pulled off the can-

dle stump and ate it up, wiped his feelers, and joined the party.

The liquid refreshments consisted of sweet and clear saké, tea, and cherry-blossom water. The solids were thunder-cakes, egg-cracknels, boiled rice, radishes, macaroni, lotus-root, and sweet potatoes. Side-dishes were piled up with flies, worms, bugs and all kinds of bait for the small fry—the finny brats that were to eat at the second table. The tea was poured by the servants of Lord Cuttle-fish.

The Queen did not wait to see the end of the feast, but laughing heartily, returned to her palace and went to sleep.

After helping himself with all the cups of his arms out of the tub of boiled rice, until Miss Mackerel made up her mind that he was a glutton, and drinking like a shoal of fishes, Lord Cuttle-fish went home, coiled himself up into a ball, and fell asleep. He had a headache next morning. But the concert and feast had done the Queen more good than all her medicine.



## XVI

### RAIKO AND HIS GUARDS

**I**N the hill country of Japan grew up a brave young warrior and clever archer who lived more than eight thousand moons ago. On account of his valor and skill in the use of the bow he was called to Kioto, to guard the imperial palace. At that time the Mikado could not sleep at night, because his rest was disturbed by a frightful beast which scared away even the sentinels in armor who stood on guard.

This dreadful beast had the wings of a bird, the body and claws of a tiger, the head of a monkey, a serpent tail, and the crackling scales of a dragon. It came night after night upon the roof of the palace, and howled and scratched so dreadfully that the poor Emperor losing all rest, grew weak and thin. Not one of the guards dared to face it in hand-to-hand fight, and none had skill enough to hit it with an arrow in the dark, though several of the imperial corps of archers had tried again and again. When the young archer received his appointment, he resolved to fight the dragon come what might. So







This was the archer's opportunity.



he strung his bow carefully, sharpened his steel-headed arrows, stored his quiver, and mounted guard alone except for his favorite servant.

It chanced to be a stormy night. The lightning was very vivid, and the thunder-demon was beating all his drums. The wind swirled around frightfully, as though the wind-imp were emptying all his bags. Toward midnight, the falcon eye of the archer saw, during a flash of lightning, the awful beast sitting at the tip of the ridge-pole, on the northeast end of the roof. He bade his servant have a torch of straw and twigs ready to light at a moment's notice, to loosen his sword blade in its sheath, and wet its hilt-pin. Then he fitted the notch of his best arrow into the silk cord of his bow.

Keeping his eyes strained, he soon saw the glare now of one eye, now two eyes, as the beast with swaying head crept along the great roof to the place on the eaves directly over the Mikado's sleeping-room. There it stopped.

This was the archer's opportunity. Aiming about a foot to the right of where he saw the eye glare, he drew his yard-length shaft clear back to his shoulder, and let fly. A dull thud, a frightful howl, a heavy bump on the ground, and the writhing of some creature among the pebbles, told in a few seconds' time that the shaft had struck flesh. The next instant the servant rushed out

with blazing torch and joined battle with his dirk. A short but fierce three-cornered fight ensued, but the warrior's sharp sword soon finished the monster by cutting his throat. Then they flayed it, and the next morning the hide was shown to his majesty.

All congratulated the brave archer on his valor and marksmanship. Many young men, sons of nobles and warriors, begged to become his pupils in archery. The Mikado ordered a noble of very high rank to present him with a famous sword named "The King of Wild Boars," and to give him a lovely maid of honor to wife. He was promoted to be captain of the guard, and given a high-sounding title. But he was also called Raiko, and by this name he is best known to all the boys and girls in Great Japan, who tell many tales of his skill and prowess. Under Captain Raiko were three brave guardsmen, one of whom was named Tsuna. The duty of these men-at-arms was to watch at the gates leading to the palace.

It had come to pass that the Blossom Capital had fallen in a dreadful condition, because the guards at the other gates had been neglected. Thieves were numerous and murders were frequent, so that many good people were afraid to go out into the streets at night. Worse than all else, was the report that hill-demons were prowling

ing around in the dark to seize people by the hair of their heads. Then they would drag them away to the mountains, tear the flesh off their bones, and eat them up.

The worst place in Kioto, to which the two-horned demons came oftenest, was at the southwestern gate. To this post of danger, Raiko sent Tsuna, the bravest of his guards.

It was on a dark, rainy, and dismal night, that Tsuna started, well-armed, to stand sentinel at the gate. His trusty helmet was knotted over his chin, and all the pieces of his armor were well laced up. His sandals were girt tight to his feet, and in his belt was thrust the trusty sword, freshly ground, until its edge was like a razor's, and with it the owner could cut asunder a hair floating in the air.

Arriving at the red pillar of the gate, Tsuna paced up and down the stone way with eyes and ears wide open. The wind was blowing frightfully, the storm howled, and the rain fell in such torrents that soon the cords of Tsuna's armor and his dress were soaked through.

The great bronze bell of the temples on the hills boomed out the hours one after another, until a single stroke told Tsuna it was the hour of midnight.

Two hours passed and still Tsuna was wide awake. The storm had lulled, but it was darker



than ever. The hour of three rang out, and the soft mellow notes of the temple bell died away like a lullaby wooing one to sleep, spite of will and vow.

The warrior, almost without knowing it, grew sleepy and fell into a doze. He started and woke up. He shook himself, jingled his armor, pinched himself, and even pulled out his little knife from the wooden scabbard of his dirk, and pricked his leg with the point of it to keep awake, but all in vain. Overcome by drowsiness, he leaned against the gate-post, and fell asleep.

This was just what the Demon wanted. All the time he had been squatting on the cross-piece at the top of the gate waiting his opportunity. He now slid down as softly as a monkey, and with his iron-like claws grabbed Tsuna by the crest of his helmet, and began to drag him up into the air.

In an instant Tsuna was awake. Seizing the imp's hairy wrist with his left hand, with his right he drew his sword, swept it round his head, and cut off the Demon's arm. Frightened and howling with pain, the creature leaped from the post, and disappeared in the clouds.

Tsuna waited with drawn sword in hand, lest the Demon might come again, but in a few hours morning dawned. The sun rose on the pagodas and gardens and temples of the capitol and the

Ninefold Circle of Flowery Hills. Everything was beautiful and bright. Tsuna returned to report to his captain, carrying the Demon's arm in triumph. Raiko examined it, and loudly praised Tsuna for his bravery, and rewarded him with a silken sash.

Now it is said that if a demon's arm be cut off it cannot be made to unite with the body again, if kept apart for a week. So Raiko warned Tsuna to lock it up, and watch it night and day, lest it be stolen from him.

Tsuna went to the stone-cutters who made images of Buddha, mortars for pounding rice, and coffers for burying money, and bought a strong box cut out of the solid stone. It had a heavy lid on it, which slid in a groove and came out only by touching a secret spring. Into this he put the severed arm. Then setting it in his bed-chamber, he guarded it day and night, keeping the gate and all his doors locked. He allowed no one who was a stranger to look at the trophy.

Six days passed by, and Tsuna began to think his prize was sure, for were not all his doors tight shut? So he set the box out in the middle of the room, and twisting some rice-straw fringe in token of sure victory and rejoicing, he sat down in ease before it. He took off his armor and put on his court robes. During the evening, but

rather late, there was a feeble knock like that of an old woman at the gate outside.

Tsuna cried out, "Who's there?"

The squeaky voice of his aunt, as it seemed, who was a very old woman, replied, "I want to see my nephew, to praise him for his bravery in cutting the Demon's arm off."

So Tsuna let her in and carefully locking the door behind her, helped the old crone into the room, where she sat down on the mats in front of the box and very close to it. Then she grew very talkative, and praised her nephew's exploit, until Tsuna felt very proud.

All the time the old woman's left shoulder was covered with her dress while her right hand was out. Finally she begged earnestly to be allowed to see the limb. Tsuna at first politely refused, but she urged until he slid back the stone lid just a little.

"This is my arm!" cried the old hag, turning into a demon, and dragging it out of the casket.

Up she flew to the ceiling, and was out of the smoke-slide through the roof in a twinkling. Tsuna rushed out of the house to shoot her with an arrow, but he saw only a demon far off in the clouds grinning horribly. While he looked, he saw the severed arm unite again with the body, and the Demon shook *both* fists at him in token of victory.



## XVII

### RAIKO SLAYS THE DEMONS

**W**HEN the Demon flew away with its arm, Tsuna noticed that it went to the northwest. He told Raiko of the incident, and plans were at once made to seek out and destroy the hill-demons. But just then Raiko fell sick with some strange disease and daily grew weaker and paler. When the Demons found this out they sent a three-eyed Imp to plague him.

This Imp, which had a snout like a hog's, three monstrous blue eyes, and a mouth full of tusks, was glad that the brave soldier could no longer fight the Demons. He would approach the sick man in his chamber, leer horribly at him, loll out his tongue, and pull down the lids of his eyes with his hairy fingers, until the sight sickened Raiko more and more.

But Raiko, well or ill, always slept with his trusty sword under his pillow. He pretended to be greatly afraid, and to cower under the bed-clothes. Then the Imp grew bolder and bolder, but when it got near his bed, Raiko drew his

blade and cut the enemy across his huge double nose. This made the Imp howl and run away, leaving tracks of blood.

When Tsuna and his band heard of their master's exploit, they came to congratulate him, and offered to hunt out the Imp and destroy him.

They followed the red drops until they came to a cavern in the mountains. Entering this they saw in the gloom a spider six feet high, with legs as long as a fishing-pole, and as thick as a giant radish. Two great yellow eyes glared at them like lamps. They noticed a great gaping wound as if done by a sword-cut on his snout.

It was a horrible, nasty hairy thing to fight with swords, since to get near enough, they would be in danger of the creature's claws. So Tsuna went and chopped down a tree as thick as a man's leg, leaving the roots on, while his comrades prepared a rope to tie up the monster, like a fly in a web. Then with a loud yell, Tsuna rushed at the spider, felled it with a blow, and held it down with the tree and roots so it could not bite or use its claws. Seeing this, Tsuna's comrades rushed in, and bound the monster's legs tight to its body so that it could not move. Drawing their swords they passed them through the spider's body and finished it. Returning in triumph to the city, they found their dear captain recovered from his illness.

Raiko thanked his brave warriors for their exploits, made a feast for them, and gave them many presents. While they were eating he told them that he had received orders from the Mikado to march against the Demons' den, slaughter them all, and rescue the prisoners he should find there. Then he showed them his commission written in large letters:

“I command you, Raiko, to chastise the Demons.”

At this time many families in Kioto were grieving over the loss of their children, and even while Tsuna had been away, several lovely damsels had been seized and taken to the Demons' den.

Lest the Demons might hear of their coming, and escape, the four trusty men disguised themselves as wandering priests of the mountains. They covered their helmets with huge hats like washbowls made of straw woven so tightly that no one could see their faces. They covered their armor with very cheap and common clothes, and then after worshipping at the shrines, began their march.

Quite pathless were the desolate mountains, for no one ever went into them except, once in a while, a poor wood-cutter or charcoal-burner; yet Raiko and his men set out with stout hearts. There were no bridges over the streams, and frightful precipices abounded. Once they had



to stop and build a bridge by felling a tree, and walking across it over a dangerous chasm. Again they came to a steep rock, to descend which they must make a ladder of creeping vines. At last they reached a dense grove at the top of a cliff, far up to the clouds, which seemed as if it might contain the demon's castle.

Approaching, they found a pretty maiden washing some clothes which had spots of blood on them. They said to her, "Sister, why are you here, and what are you doing?"

"Ah," said she, with a deep sigh, "you must not come here. This is the haunt of Demons. They eat human flesh and they will eat yours. Look here," she continued pointing to a pile of white bones of men, women and children, "you must go down the mountain as quickly as you came." Saying this she burst into tears.

But instead of being frightened or sorrowful, the warriors nearly danced for joy. "We have come here by the Mikado's orders, to destroy the Demons," said Raiko, patting his breast, where inside his dress in the damask bag was the imperial order.

At this the maiden dried her tears and smiled so sweetly that Raiko's heart was touched by her beauty.

"But how came you to live among these cannibal Demons?" asked Raiko.

She blushed deeply as she replied sadly, "Although they eat men and old women, they keep the young maidens to wait on them."

"It's a great pity," said Raiko, "but we shall now avenge our fellow subjects of the Mikado, as well as your shame and cruel treatment, if you will kindly show us the way up the cliff to the monster's den."

"Willingly," she answered, "if you are not afraid."

They began to climb the hill, but they had not gone far before they met a monster who was a cook in the chief Demon's kitchen. He was carrying a human limb for his master's lunch. Raiko's men gnashed their teeth silently, and clutched their swords under their coats, yet they courteously saluted the cannibal cook and asked for an interview with the chief. The Demon smiled in his sleeve, and beckoned them forward, thinking of the fine dinners his master would make of the four men.

A few feet further, and a turn in the path brought them to the front of the Demon's castle. Among tall and mighty boulders of rock, which loomed up to the clouds, there was an opening in the dense groves, thickly covered with vines and mosses like an arbor. From this point, the view over the plains below commanded a space of hundreds of miles. In the distance the red

pagodas, white temple-gables, and castle towers of Kioto were visible.

Inside the cave was a banqueting hall large enough to seat one hundred persons. The floor was neatly covered with new, clean mats of sea-green rice-straw, on which tables, silken cushions, arm-rests, drinking-cups, bottles and many other articles of comfort lay about. The stone walls were richly decorated with curtains and hangings of fine silken stuffs.

At the end of the long hall, on a raised dais, our heroes presently observed, as a curtain was lifted, the chief Demon, of august, yet frightful appearance. He was seated on a heap of luxurious cushions made of blue and crimson crape, stuffed with swan's down. He was leaning on a golden arm-rest. His body was quite red, and he was round and fat like a baby grown up. He had very black hair cut like a small boy's, and on the top of his head, just peeping through the hair were two very short horns. Around him were a score of lovely maidens—the fairest of Kioto—on whose beautiful faces was stamped the misery they dared not fully show, yet could not entirely conceal. Along the wall other Demons sat or lay at full length, each one with his handmaid seated beside him to wait on him and pour out his wine. All of the Demons were of horrible aspect, which only made the beauty of the maidens more con-



spicuous. Seeing our heroes walk in the hall led by the cook, each banqueter was as happy as a spider, when in his lurking hole he feels the jerk on his web-thread that tells him a fly is caught. Each of them at once poured out a fresh saucer of saké and drank it down.

Raiko and his men separated, and began talking freely with the Demons until the partitions at one corner were slid aside, and a troop of little demons who were waiter-boys entered. They brought in many dishes, and the monsters fell to and ate. The noise of their jaws sounded like the pounding of rice mills.

Our heroes were nearly sickened at the repast, for it consisted chiefly of human flesh, while the wine cups were made of empty human skulls. However, they laughed and talked and excused themselves from eating, saying they had just lunched.

As the Demons drank more and more they grew lively, laughed till the cave echoed, and sang uproarious songs. Every time they grinned, they showed their terrible tusks, and teeth like fangs. All of them had horns, though most of these were very short.

The chief Demon became especially hilarious, and drank the health of every one of his four guests in a skull full of wine. To supply him there was a tub full of saké at hand, and his usual

drinking-vessel was a dish which seemed to be as large as a full moon.

Raiko now offered to return the courtesies shown them by dancing "the Kioto dance," for which he was famous. Stepping out into the centre of the hall, with his fan in one hand, he danced gracefully and with such wonderful ease, that the Demons screamed with delight, and clapped their hands in applause, saying they had never seen anything to equal it. Even the maidens, lost in admiration of the polished courtier, forgot their sorrow, and felt as happy for the time as though they were at home dancing.

The dance finished, Raiko took from his bosom a bottle of saké, and offered it to the chief Demon as a gift, saying it was the best wine of Sakai. The delighted monster drank and gave a sip to each of his lords saying, "This is the best liquor I ever tasted. You must drink the health of our friends in it."

Now Raiko had bought, at the most skilful druggists' in the capital, a powerful sleeping potion, and mixed it with the wine, which made it taste very sweet. In a few minutes all the Demons had dropped off asleep, and their snores sounded like the rolling thunder of the mountains.

Then Raiko rose up and gave the signal to his comrades. Whispering to the maidens to leave

the room quietly, they drew their swords, and with as little noise as possible slew the slumbering Demons one after another. The chief one lying like a lion on his cushions was still sleeping, the snores issuing out of his nose like thunder from a cloud. The four warriors approached him last and like loyal vassals as they were, they first turned their faces toward Kioto, revered the Mikado, and prayed for the blessing of the gods who made Japan. Raiko then drew near, and measuring the width of the Demon's neck with his sword found that it would be short. Suddenly, the blade lengthened of itself. Then lifting his weapon, he smote with all his might and cut the neck clean through.

In an instant, the head flew up in the air gnashing its teeth and rolling its yellow eyes, while the horns sprouted out to a horrible length, the jaws opening and shutting like the edges of an earthquake fissure. It flew up and whirled round the room seven times. Then with a rush it flew at Raiko's head, and bit through the straw hat and into the iron helmet inside. But this final effort had exhausted its strength. Its motions ceased and it fell heavily to the floor.

Anxiously the comrades helped their fallen leader to rise, and examined his head. But he was unhurt,—not a scratch was on him. The heroes congratulated each other and after des-



patching the smaller demons, brought out all the treasure and divided it equally. Then they set the castle on fire and buried the bones of the victims, setting up a stone to mark the spot. All the maidens and captives were assembled together, and in great state and pomp they returned to Kioto. The virgins were restored to their parents, and many a desolate home was made joyful, and many a mourning garment taken off. Raiko was honored by the Mikado in being made a court noble and appointed Chief of the entire garrison of Kioto. All the people were grateful for his valor. His three lieutenants were also given posts of honor. The land was free from evil spirits ever afterward.

## XVIII

### THE BOY BROUGHT UP IN THE WOODS

**W**HEN one sees two parties of boys in Japan, one in white and the other in red, playing the game of Genji and Héiké (Haykee) he recalls the time, a thousand years ago, when cats were wild animals, and soldiers called the Reds and Whites were at civil war. Even the men on horseback, who play polo, are dressed in red and white, only they crack balls, instead of the heads of their enemies.

In the days long ago, the reds at first beat, but the whites later on won the victory and the Héiké were all cut off or hid in the mountains.

One day Raiko the hero put on the disguise of a wood-cutter and went up into the forests on the high hills, for he had heard that a hermit woman and her son lived there and that the boy was a wonder for strength, and lived with the wild animals, that were his playmates.

This boy was named Kintaro, which means Golden First Son. It was said that he had been taught by the Tengu, the long-nosed sprites that live in the woods. They know all the secrets and

can understand the wild animals, when they make signs or talk to each other.

When Raiko came upon the scene and saw the Tengus, with noses a yard long, sitting as judges and looking on, while the lusty boy wrestled with a bear, he did not know whether to burst out laughing or to clap his hands in applause.

There, in the middle of a clearing among the clumps of bamboo, on a high ledge of rock, sat a crowd of long-nosed Tengu, who were lookers on. They watched a fat boy wrestling with a young bear.

The little fellow was not a bit afraid of the cub, but threw the bear down. Then every one of the animals made a noise or gave sign that showed how they admired the victor. The deer lowered and lifted its horns, the hare stood up on its hind legs and wiggled its fore-paws, and the monkey leaped up and down, chattering all the while.

When they saw Raiko, they all became livelier than ever. The bear growled, the monkey broke out in a fresh chatter. Bunny, the hare, made a sort of whistle, and the deer called, as if to its mate. The Tengus instead of scowling, as if Raiko was an intruder, clapped their hands and wiggled their noses up and down, as if they were pleased; and all were as jolly as creatures could be.

The boy seemed to be about eight or ten years



old. All he had on was a sort of coat or apron, that covered his body, leaving his arms and legs free. Near by him was a big axe, for this little giant—so he seemed in strength—could cut down a tree, like a wood chopper.

The funniest sight of all was when the monkey and the hare had a tussle together, like their master and the bear. They jeered at each other and one called out, "come on, old Red Face," while the other shouted "Donkey Ears." Then they set to. The hare beat the monkey in the first round. The monkey pulled the hare's long ears, and the hare pushed in the stomach of the monkey. After several bouts, the deer, being the umpire, declared the monkey victor.

Then the hare and the deer had a trial, the bear being the umpire. This time the hare won, for it pushed down the fellow with horns, even to his knees.

After this, the boy-master called a halt. Then all sat down to dinner. The bear ate turnips and honey, the hare had plenty of grass, the deer enjoyed his pile of lily pads, the monkey was given a ball of rice like a dumpling and the boy ate out of a bowl his pickles, broiled fish and boiled rice. The Tengus went off to take their food in the cane brake in which they lived.

It all seemed so strange that Raiko kept on watching to see what next would happen. After

their dinner, they all marched down to the stream of water, which was wide. Raiko wondered how they should get across.

That was easy enough, after the strong boy had pulled up a tree by the roots and cut off some of the branches with his axe. He threw it across and all walked over to the other side. Raiko followed them. He saw the monkey climb a tree. The hare ran into its burrow. The bear crept into a hollow tree and the deer strolled to its lair. Then the big boy stopped at a hut in the woods. He left his axe near the doorstep and went inside.

Raiko heard the woman call the boy "Kimbo," that is, Kin darling, and listened while the lad told of the wrestling match. Coming near, he knocked at the door, bowed low, and asked that he might enter.

He saw a fine-looking old lady, who must have been very beautiful in early life, and this he knew must be the Old Woman of the Hills, of whom he had heard, while the lad was the famous Kintaro, or Golden Boy, and her son. Both of them welcomed Raiko and so he kicked off his clogs, left them outside, and, entering, fell on all fours, hands and knees in polite salute.

They asked who he was and he told them. The mother was very glad to meet a knight from the capital, for she had long hoped that some day her son, when grown to be a man, should also be a

knight. Then he would dress in silk clothes, with his family crest on his breast, sleeves and back, and wear two swords as was then the fashion with the brave knights. Her family was of the Genji clan, whose mark or crest was three gentian flowers set above three long leaves. Each knight of the Genji clan wore this crest, in white silk, on his sleeves, breast and back. In time of war, he put on a suit of armor and the Genji crest was on his banner. Some of the knights had the family flag set in a socket fixed in their backs and rising above their heads.

While the mother was enjoying a day-dream, seeing in vision her son on a war horse riding to battle, Kintaro dared their visitor to wrestle with him.

The big fellow thought he would quickly throw the boy, but no! He found he had his match. After several bouts, they called it a drawn game, in which neither won. Then they sat down around the charcoal fire, which was set in a square hole in the middle of the floor, to have a chat.

"Honored lady," said Raiko, "your son is very strong. Would you like me to take him to the capital and make him one of the Mikado's guards?"

"Your Augustness," said the lady, "I should be most happy. I am of the family of Genji, and nothing would I like more than to see my son



serve under the Emperor's banner, as a knight, wearing the Genji crest."

"Thank you," replied Raiko. "I shall see that he is trained up to a hardy life so as to be a brave man, who will do honor to his ancestors."

The mother bowed her head to the floor, her forehead resting upon her outstretched hands, and thanked Raiko most warmly.

"Thank you, dear Mother," said Kintaro. "As soon as I am a man and wear two swords with the family crest on my silk coat, I shall come and build you a house and care for you as long as you live."

"I know you will, my dear son. Now go with this gentleman and do honor to the Emperor, to your ancestors and to the Genji name."

In Japan, they do not kiss, but Kintaro bowed low on the matting, in reverence to his mother. Then followed the funniest farewell ever seen. Kintaro left his axe behind him, but the bear, the monkey and the hare came to see him off. The bear offered him its paw, the rabbit stood upon its hind legs and wiggled its fore-paws up and down. The deer raised and lowered its antlers several times, to show how sorry he was; while the monkey climbed a tree to see his master as long as he was in sight, as he went down the mountain path.

When Kintaro was brought before Raiko's

captains, they were all happy to have such a boy to train up. He was promised a place with the palace guards.

So Kintaro grew up to be one of the bravest and strongest of the Mikado's soldiers. When he was made a Captain, he went back into the mountains to find his mother. He brought her to the beautiful Kioto, which is called "The City of the Ninefold Circle of Flowers." There she lived happily all the days of her life. Kintaro married one of the most lovely maidens in the capital. His sons and daughters, besides the crest of the Genji had the sign Kin (meaning gold) embroidered on their coats, and all honored them as the descendants of a great hero.

## XIX

### THE AMBITIOUS CARP.

A FEW years ago there was a boy in Japan, who was very diligent at school and had made fine progress in his studies. He was especially quick at learning Chinese characters, of which every Japanese gentleman who wishes to be called educated must know at least two thousand. For, although the Chinese and Japanese are two very different languages, yet the Japanese, Koreans and Chinese use the same letters to write with, just as English, Italian, French, and Spaniards all employ the same alphabet.

Now the boy's father had promised that when he read through the Ancient History of Japan, he would give him a book of wonderful Chinese stories. The boy performed his task, and his father kept his promise. One day on his return from a journey to Kioto, he presented his son with sixteen volumes, all neatly silk-bound, well illustrated with wood-cuts, and printed clearly on thin, silky mulberry paper, from the best wooden blocks. Japanese books are much lighter and thinner than ours.



The boy was so delighted with the wonderful stories of heroes and warriors, travelers and sailors, that he almost felt himself in China. He read far into the night, with the lamp inside of his mosquito curtain; finally he fell asleep, still undressed, but with his head full of all sorts of Chinese wonders.

He dreamed he was far away in China, walking along the banks of the great Yellow River. Everything was very strange. The people talked an entirely different language from his own; had on different clothes; and, instead of the nice shaven head and top-knot of the Japanese, every one wore a queer long pigtail of hair, that dangled at his heels. Even the boats were of a strange form. Perched on projecting rails of the fishing smacks, sat rows of cormorants, each with a ring around his neck. Every few minutes one of them would dive under the water, and after a while come struggling up with a fish in its mouth, so big that the fishermen had to help the bird into the boat. The game was then flung into a basket, and the cormorant was treated to a slice of raw fish, by way of encouragement and to keep the bird from the bad habit of eating the live fish whole. This the ravenous creature would sometimes try to do, even though the ring was put around his neck to prevent it.

It was springtime, and the buds were just

bursting into flower. The river was full of fish, especially of carp, ascending to the great rapids or cascades. Here the current ran at a prodigious rate of swiftness, and the waters rippled and boiled and roared with frightful noise. Yet, strange to say, many of the fish were swimming up the stream as if their lives depended on it. They leaped and floundered about, only to be tossed back and left exhausted in the river, where they panted and gasped for breath in the eddies at the side. Some were so bruised against the rocks that, after a few spasms, they floated white and stiff, on the water, dead, and were swept down the stream. Still the shoal leaped and strained every fin, until their scales flashed in the sun like a host of armored warriors in battle. The boy enjoying it as if it were a real conflict of wave and fishes, clapped his hands with delight.

“What is the name of this part of the river?” he asked of an old white-bearded sage standing by and looking on.

“We call it Dragons’ Gate,” said the sage.

“Will you please write the characters for it,” said the boy producing his ink-case and brush-pen, with a roll of soft writing paper made from the inner bark of the mulberry tree.

The sage wrote the two Chinese characters, meaning “The Gate of the Dragons,” and turned

away to watch a carp that seemed almost up into smooth water.

“ Oh! I see,” said the boy to himself. “ There must be some meaning in this fish-climbing.”

He went forward a few rods, to where the banks trended upward into high bluffs, crowned by towering firs, through the top branches of which fleecy white clouds sailed slowly along, so near the sky did the tree-tops seem. Down under the cliffs the river ran perfectly smooth, almost like a mirror, and broadened out to the opposite shore. Far back, along the current, he could still see the rapids shelving down. It was crowded at the bottom with leaping fish, whose numbers gradually thinned out toward the centre; while near the top, close to the edge of level water, one solitary fish, of powerful fin and tail, breasted the steep stream. Now a leap forward, then a slide backward, sometimes further to the rear than the next leap made up for, then steady progress, then a slip, but every moment nearer, until, clearing foam and ripple and spray at one bound, it passed the edge and swam happily in smooth water.

It was inside the Dragons' Gate!

Now came a wonderful thing. One of the fleecy white clouds suddenly left the host in the deep blue above, dipped down from the sky, and swirling round and round as if it were a water



spout, scratched and frayed the edge of the water like a fisher's troll. The carp saw and darted toward it. In a moment the fish was transformed into a white Dragon, and, rising into the cloud, floated off toward heaven. A streak or two of red fire, a gleam of terrible eyes, and the flash of white scales were all that the bewildered lad saw. Then he awoke.

"How strange that a poor little carp, a common fish that lives in the river, should become a great white Dragon, and soar up into the sky, to live there!" he mused the next day, as he told his mother of his dream.

"Yes," said she; "and what a lesson for you. See how the carp persevered, leaping over all difficulties, never giving up till it became a Dragon. I hope my son will mount over all obstacles, and rise to honor and to high office under the Government."

"Oh! oh! now I see!" he cried. "That is what my teacher means when he says the students in Tokio have a proverb: 'I'm a fish to-day, but I hope to be a Dragon to-morrow,' and that's what Father means when he says: 'That fish's son has become a white Dragon, while I am yet only a carp.'"

"You are right," replied his mother smiling; "and I hope you will be the big carp that becomes a Dragon."

So on the third day of the third month, at the Feast of Flags, the boy hoisted a great fish, made of paper, fifteen feet long and hollow like a bag. It was yellow, with black scales and streaks of gold, and red gills and mouth, in which two strong strings were fastened. It was lifted by a rope to the top of a high bamboo pole on the roof of the house. There the breeze caught it, and swelled it out round and full of air. The wind made the fins work, the tail flap, and the head tug, until it looked just like a carp trying to swim the rapids of the Yellow River—the symbol of ambition and perseverance to every one who beheld it.

## XX

### LORD LONG-LEGS' PROCESSION

**L**OVELY and bright in the month of May, at the time of rice-planting, was the day on which the Baron Long-legs was informed by his chamberlain, Hop-hop, that on the morrow his lordship's retinue would be in readiness to accompany their worshipful Master on his journey to Yedo. This Lord Long-legs was a noble who ruled over four acres of rice-field and whose revenue was ten thousand rice-stalks. His personal retinue, who were all Grasshoppers, like himself, numbered over six thousand, while his court consisted of many nobles, such as Mantis, Beetle, and Pinching-bug. The maids of honor who waited on his Queen Katydid, were Lady-bugs, Butterflies, and Goldsmiths, and his messengers were Fire-flies and Dragon-flies. Once in a while the Beetle was sent on an errand; but the stupid fellow had a habit of running plump into things, and bumping his head so badly that he always forgot what he was sent for. Besides these, Lord Long-legs had a great many servants in the kitchen—such as Grubs, Spiders, Toads,



and Worms. The entire population of his dominion, including the common folks, numbered several millions, and ranked all the way from Horse-flies down to Ants, Mosquitoes, and Ticks.

Many of his subjects were very industrious and produced fine fabrics, which, however, were seized and made use of by great monsters, called Men. The silver-gray worms kept spinning-wheels in their heads. They had a fashion of eating mulberry leaves, and changing them into fine threads, called silk. The Wasps made paper, and the Bees distilled honey. There was another insect which spread white wax on the trees. These were all retainers or friendly vassals of the Baron in the Castle.

Now it was Lord Long-legs' duty once a year to go up to Yedo to pay his respects to the great Tycoon and to spend several weeks in the Eastern metropolis. I shall not take the time nor tax the patience of my readers in telling about all the bustle and preparation that went on in the mansion of the Baron for a whole week previous to starting. Suffice it to say that clothes were washed and starched, and dried on a board, to keep them from shrinking; trunks and baskets were packed; banners and umbrellas put in order; the lacquered boxes and the brass ornaments dusted off; and swords and spears polished. Every little item was personally examined by the

chief inspector. This functionary was a black-and-white-legged Mosquito, who, on account of his long nose, could pry into a thing further than any other of his lordship's officers; and, if anything went wrong, he could make more noise over it than any one else. As for the retainers, down to the very last lackey and coolie, each one tried to outshine the other in cleanliness and smart attire.

The Bumble-bee brushed off the pollen from his legs; and the humbler Honey-bee, after allowing his children to suck his paws, to get the honey sticking to them, spruced up and listened attentively to the orders read to him by the train-leader, Sir Locust, who prided himself on being seventeen years old, and looked on all the others as children. He read from a piece of wasp-nest paper: "No leaving the line to suck flowers, except at halting-time." The Blue-tailed Fly washed his hands and face over and over again. The Lady-bugs wept many tears, because they could not go with the company; the Crickets chirped rather gloomily, because none with short limbs could go on the journey; while old Daddy Long-legs almost turned a somersault for joy when told he might carry a bundle in the train. All being in readiness, the procession was to start at six o'clock in the morning. The exact minute was to be announced by the timekeeper of the

mansion, Mr. Flea, whose house was on the back of Neko, a great black cat, who lived in the porter's lodge of the castle, near by. Mr. Flea was to notice the opening or slits in the monster's moony-green eyes, which, when closed to a certain width, would indicate six o'clock. Then with a few jumps he was to announce it to a Mosquito friend of his, who would fly with the news to the gatekeeper of the mansion, one Whirligig by name.

So, punctually to the hour, the great double gate swung wide open, and the procession passed out and marched on over the hill. All the servants of Lord Long-legs were out, to see the grand sight. They were down on their knees, saying: "Please go slowly." When their master's palanquin passed, they bowed their heads to the dust, as was proper. The ladies, who were left behind, cried bitterly, and soaked their paper handkerchiefs with tears, especially one fair brown creature, who was next of kin to Lord Long-legs, being an Ant on her mother's side.

The procession was closed by six old Spider daddies marching two by two, who were a little stupid and groggy, having had a late supper, and a jolly feast the night before. When the great gate slammed shut, one of them caught the end of his foot in it, and was lamed for the rest of the journey. He was ordered to walk alongside



of old Daddy Long-legs, who hobbled along, with a bundle on his back. These two were the only funny fellows in the procession, and made much talk among bystanders on the road.

This is the order and the way they looked. First there went out, far ahead, a plump, tall Mantis, with a great long baton of grass, which he swung to and fro before him, from right to left, like a drum-major, crying out: "Down on your knees! Get down with you!" Whereat all the Ants, Bugs and Lizards at once bent their forelegs, and the Toads, which were already squatting, bobbed their noses in the dust. Even the Mud-turtles poked their heads out of the water to see what was going on. It was forbidden to any insect to remain on a tall stalk of grass, lest he might look down on His Highness. So all the Worms and Grubs that lived up in trees or high bushes had to come down to the ground. Even the Inch-worm had to wind himself up and stop measuring his length, while the line was passing. And in case of Grubs in the nest or Moths in the cocoon, too young to crawl out, the law compelled their parents to cover them over with a leaf. It would be an insult to Lord Long-legs to have any one look down on him.

Next followed two lantern-bearers, holding Glow-worms for lanterns in their fore-paws.

These were wrapped in cases made of leaves, which they took off at night. Behind were six Fire-flies, well supplied with self-acting lamps, which they kept hidden somewhere under their wings. Next marched four abreast the band of little Weevils, carrying the umbrellas of state, which were morning-glories—some open, some shut. Behind them strutted four green Grasshoppers, spear-bearers, carrying pink blossoms.

Just before the palanquin were two tall dandies, each of them a Mantis. High lords themselves and of gigantic stature with arms akimbo and feelers far up in the air, they bore aloft the insignia of their Lord Long-legs. These fellows strutted along on their hind legs, their backs as stiff as hemp stalks, their noses pointing to the stars, and their legs striding like stilts. The priest in his robes, a Praying Beetle, who was chaplain, walked on solemnly.

Meanwhile a great crowd of spectators lined the path; but all were on their knees. Frogs and Toads blinked out of the sides of their heads. The pretty red Lizards glided out, to see the splendid show; Worms stopped crawling; and all kinds of Bugs ceased climbing, and came down from the grass and flower-stalks, to bow humbly before the train of Lord Long-legs. Bug mothers hastened, with their bug babies on their backs, down to the road, and, squatting down, taught

their little ones to put their fore-paws politely together and bow down on their front knees. No one dared to speak out loud; but the Mole-cricket, nudging his fellow under the wing, said: "Just look at that green Mantis! He looks as though he would 'rush out with a battle-axe on his shoulder to meet a chariot.' See how he ogles his fellow!"

"Yes; and just behold that bandy-legged Hopper, will you? I could walk better than that myself," said the other.

"'Sh!" said the Mole-cricket. "Here comes the lordly palanquin."

Everybody now cast a squint up under their eyebrows, and watched the palanquin go by. It was made of delicately-woven striped grass, bound with bamboo threads, lacquered, and finished with curtains of gauze, made of dragon-fly wings, through which Lord Long-legs could peep. It was borne on the shoulders of four stalwart Hoppers, who, carrying rest-poles of grass, trudged along, with much sweat and fuss and wiping of their foreheads, stopping occasionally to change shoulders. At their side walked a body-guard of eight Hoppers, armed with pistils, and having side-arms of sword-grass. They were also provided with poison-shoots, in case of trouble. Other bearers followed, keeping step and carrying the regalia, consisting of chrysanthem-





Lord Long-Leg's Procession.





mum stalks and blossoms. Then followed, in double rank, a long string of Wasps, who were for show and nothing more. Between them, inside, carefully saddled, bridled, and in full housings, was a Horse-fly, led by a Snail, to keep the restive animal from going at a too rapid pace.

Three big, gawky helmet-headed Beetles next followed, bearing rice-sprouts, with full heads of rice.

"Oh! oh! look there!" cried a little Grub at the side of the road. "See the little Grasshopper riding on his father's back!"

"'Sh!" said Madam Butterfly, putting one paw on her baby's neck, for fear of being arrested for making a noise.

It was so. The little Hopper, tired of long walking, had climbed on his father's back for a ride, holding on by the feelers and seeing everything.

Finally, toward the end of the procession, was a great crowd of common Hoppers, Beetles, and Bugs of all sorts, carrying the presents to be given in Yedo, and the clothing, food, and utensils for the use of Lord Long-legs on the journey; for the hotels were sometimes very poor on the highroad and the Baron liked his comforts. Besides, it was necessary for Lord Long-legs to travel with proper dignity. His messengers always went before and engaged lodging-places, as



the Fleas, Spiders and Mosquitoes from other localities, that traveled up and down the great high-road, sometimes occupied the places first. The procession wound up with the rear-guard of Daddy Long-legs, and the limping Spider. These prevented any insult or disrespect from the rabble. After the line had passed, insects could cross the road, traffic and travel were resumed, and the road was cleared, while the procession faded from view in the distance.

“Mother, what did the worshipful Lord Long-legs look like? I couldn’t see him,” said little Grub.

“I don’t know,” replied Madam Butterfly; “I never saw him either, and I don’t think anybody else did.”

And it was true. All they could see was the palanquin. But it was a fine procession just the same.

## XXI

### HOW TODA SLEW THE LONG SERPENT

**A** THOUSAND years ago, near Kioto, there dwelt a mighty monster called a Mu-ka-dé. It was half serpent, half centipede. So great in length was this creature that it could coil itself seven times around the mountain. It ravaged the rice-fields, ate up all the grain in the stacks on the meadows, and every bean in the gardens, so that all the boys and girls came near starving. Yet no one could help it, for all the men in the region were afraid to attack the monster, for its poisonous breath could choke human beings even when it was a mile distant.

One lady, the widow of a court noble, who had many children to feed, resolved to go in search of a brave hunter, or warrior, and ask him to kill the centipede-serpent. She heard that the knight Toda, one of the bravest of the Mikado's guards, was coming into the province. So she put on the court dress, which she had worn when living in Kioto, to make herself look very lovely. No fewer than twelve robes of crimson silk and an

upper dress of brocade made her costume. Above her girdle was snow-white, while blood-red was the long divided skirt, which trailed several feet behind her. When at court, she walked over the soft matting of the palace floor, to present herself, with the other noble ladies, before the Mikado, she was really standing on her feet, inside these long trailing robes. The idea was to seem as if kneeling to do honor to the Emperor, while really remaining upright.

So, all gorgeously arrayed with her luxuriant black hair done up in fan shape, in front of her head, and hanging in a long braid down her back, she awaited the coming of Toda, the bravest knight in all Japan.

When he appeared, she saluted him and then told her sad story. She begged him, as a loyal warrior, to protect her from the terrible enemy that ate up her children's food, and might even destroy them all.

Toda the brave at once promised that, if she would show him where the monster's lair was, he would fight him; but that having then only one arrow in his quiver, he must go and get more and would come back within an hour.

By the time of his return, the lady had put off her court dress and had donned a suit of coarse hempen stuff. Her feet were shod in sandals of plaited rice straw and she was ready to



walk for leagues. Yet even in her plain dress, Toda thought her as beautiful, in face and form, as she was brave in her venture.

It was a long walk to the mountain and it was night before they arrived near the monster's lair. While they were opening their little pocket baskets to eat their lunch, of rice, fish, pickles and tea, Toda looked up and saw what appeared to be two moons rising over the mountainside. The lady, not a bit afraid, explained that these were the monster's eyes.

Fitting a shaft to his bowstring, Toda drew the feathered end clear up to his ear and let fly the arrow. A dull thud was heard and one moon went out. Quickly he sped another shaft at the second moon, and no sooner had the bowstring twanged, than this faded out also and all was dark.

Toda now knew that these moons he had seen were, as the lady had said, nothing less than the two eyes of the terrible monster, which though it might be wounded was not yet dead, but yet able to do great mischief.

Now Toda knew even in those days, what wise men of science know and can explain to-day, that salvia from the human mouth can kill young centipedes, and if the heads of big ones are kept moist with spittle, they will die. So he wetted well the point of his third arrow in his mouth and

then shot it at the huge mass which, in the darkness, he supposed was the body of the Mu-ka-dé.

At once there broke out the most awful bellowsings, which echoed among the mountains and came back to their ears with a roar that nearly deafened them. When the real moon rose up and flooded the earth with its silvery light, they saw that the brute with many legs had unwound itself from the mountain and lay on its back, dead, like one enormous black log, with its thousand spikes up in the air which were its legs. The next morning flocks of birds and beasts of prey were feeding on the monster. Toda and the lady were glad to know that the Mu-ka-dé was only carrion for the crows.

Now came the moment when the grateful lady told Toda the secret of who she was. For, though she could dress like either a peasant or a Court lady, she was none other than Benten, the daughter of the Dragon King of the World under Lake Biwa, Japan's largest body of fresh water.

Inviting him to a great feast in her father's palace, she wafted him down, down, to the bottom of the deep lake. There in a marble palace, from dishes made of diamonds, and from trays of red coral, and cups of crystal he ate and drank his fill. He was waited on by beings that seemed to be lovely girls, but he could not tell whether they were fishes or maidens, for it all appeared as if

in a dream of delight. They were of bright colors and their clothes were made of shining scales. So strange and wonderful was it all, that when the dancing and music began, Toda was hardly surprised; for, in dreams, we never wonder at anything. Yet afterward, when he told his story to friends, he said he could not be sure whether these singers, dancers, and players on the drums, flutes, and strings were real girls, or only fishes that looked like girls.

Hours and days sped by and when Toda said he must return home, the king clapped his hands, and then, out of hidden doors, trooped forth a band of curious creatures. These carried presents of many kinds, such as rolls of silk, bags of rice, a big bell and other things of wealth and beauty. They all had on helmets, each with a dragon's head on top, and their robes were very much like that of fishes, for every color one could think of was in their clothes. These went with Toda all the way to Kioto. Some carried banners, with praises inscribed to Toda as a deliverer.

Meanwhile Toda's household and servants wondered first, why their master did not come back that night, and then had stayed away several days. When one of the watchers in the city climbed up on the fire-ladder, or lookout, which reached above the housetops, and saw the procession coming, he gave the signal and they all



marched out to welcome their lord and carry home the presents.

For the moment Toda's servants arrived, the Lake King's people and servants of Benten left the presents on the ground and in a snap of a finger disappeared. Some say they plunged into the lake and swam like fishes, or dived like turtles, down into the deep. To carry the bags of rice, casks of food and rolls of silk was easy enough, but it took fourteen men to carry home the bell.

Once inside his mansion, Toda, at his leisure, looked over his gifts from the Dragon King. Among these were robes of silk, bags of rice, jars of sweet liquid, a sword and purse of money, a pot to cook rice in and a bell, big enough to hang in a temple yard.

Every one of these presents was magical. The wonderful thing about the sword was that its edge never dulled, no matter how much it was used.

Every year Toda had a new coat made of the silk, but the roll kept its length the same as before.

The jars of sweet liquid never failed, but always remained full to the brim; it never soured, but was always delicious.

In the cooking-pot, everything put in, whether rice, or turnips, or beans, or chicken, or fish, or

venison, came out cooked for dinner and was always savory.

As for the purse of money, it never got empty.

Yet with all these magic gifts, Toda, who hated waste, never squandered anything.

As he did not know what to do with the big bell, when some priests of the temple of Benten asked for it as a gift, Toda gladly made a present of it to them. It was hung up and for centuries boomed out the time of day and night. Every two hours its voice was heard, for in Old Japan, each hour was one hundred and twenty minutes long. Toda helped to make Benkéi's fame, as we have seen in our story Number Ten.

But most of all, Toda valued the bag of rice, for it made his fortune and gave him a famous title. No matter how much was taken each day, the supply of white grain in the bag was just the same the next morning. It was indeed a wonder.

But more! Toda was the second son of his parents and when a boy, before his father and elder brother died, and left him to become the head of the house and family, he was nicknamed "Lord Cold Rice." This was because he was helped last, after all the others, when the boiled rice was no longer hot.

But now that he could, every day, give a feast of hot rice to as many guests as he wished to in-

vite, and there was always enough for all, and more in the bag, everybody called him My Lord Bag of Rice.

As for Benten, the sailors all worship her and her image is in all the idol shops. Besides her many arms, holding gifts for her favorites, she sits on her throne with one small white dragon coiled on her head and another green dragon in the blue waves beneath, ready to do her bidding. So the street or avenue (do'-ri) in Yokohama, which is richest in all pretty things, is very properly called Benten Dori.



## XXII

### THE POWER OF LOVE

**Q**UIET and shady was the spot in the midst of one of the loveliest valley landscapes in the empire, near the banks of the Hidaka River, where stood a famous tea-house. It was surrounded on all sides by glorious mountains, ever robed with deep forest, silver-threaded with flashing waterfalls, to which the lovers of nature paid many a visit. Here poets were inspired to write stanzas in praise of the white foam and the twinkling streamlets. Here the priests loved to muse and meditate. Anon merry picnic parties spread their mats, looped their canvas screens, and feasted out of nests of lacquered boxes, drinking the amber saké from cups no larger nor thicker than an egg-shell, while the sound of guitar and drum kept time to dance and song.

The garden of the tea-house was as lovely a piece of art as the florist's cunning could produce. Those who emerged from the deep woods of the lofty hill called the Dragon's Claw, could see in the garden a living copy of the landscape

before them. There were mimic mountains, ten feet high, and miniature hills veined by a tiny path, with dwarfed pine groves, clumps of bamboo, a patch of grass for meadow, and a valley just like the great gully of the mountains, times smaller, yet only twenty feet long. So perfect was the imitation that even the miniature irrigated rice-fields, each no larger than a checkerboard, were in full sprout. To make this little gem of nature in art complete, there fell from over a rock at one end a lovely little waterfall two feet high, which after an angry splash over the stones, rolled on over an absurdly small beach, all white-sanded and pebbled, threading its silver way beyond, until lost in fringes of lilies and aquatic plants. In one broad space imitating a lake, was a lotus pond, lined with iris, in which the fins of gold fish and silver carp flashed in the sunbeams. Here and there the nose of a tortoise protruded, while on a rugged rock sat an old grandfather surveying the scene with one or two of his grandchildren asleep on his shell and sunning themselves.

The fame of the tea-house, its excellent fare, and special delicacy of its mountain trout, sugar-jelly and well-flavored rice-cakes, drew hundreds of visitors, especially lovers of grand scenery.

Just across the river, which was visible from the veranda of the tea-house, rose the lofty firs

that surrounded a Buddhist temple. Hard by was the red pagoda, which peeped between the trees. A long row of paper-windowed and tile-roofed dwellings to the right made up the monastery, in which a snowy eyebrowed but rosy-faced old abbot and some twenty priests dwelt, all shaven-faced and shaven-pated, in crape robes and straw sandals, their only food being water and vegetables.

Not the least noticeable of the array of stone lanterns, and bronze images with aureoles round their heads, and incense-burners and holy water tanks, and dragon spouts, was the belfry, which stood on a stone platform. Under its roof hung the massive bronze bell ten feet high. When struck with a suspended log, like a trip-hammer, it boomed solemnly over the valley and flooded three leagues of space with the melody which died away as sweetly as an infant falling in slumber. This mighty bell was six inches thick and weighed several tons.

Of the tea-house across the river, its sweetest charm, and fairest flower was Kiyo, the host's daughter. She was a lovely maiden of but eighteen, as graceful as the bamboo reed swaying in the breeze on a moonlit summer's eve, and as pretty as the blossoms of the cherry tree. Far and wide floated the fame of Kiyo like the fragrance of white lilies, when the wind, sweeping



down the mountain heights, comes perfume-laden to the traveler.

As she busied herself about the garden, or as her white socks slipped over the mat-laid floor, she was the picture of grace itself. When at twilight, with her own hands she lighted the gay lanterns that hung in festoons along the eaves of the tea-house above the veranda, her bright eyes sparkling, her red silk under dress half visible through her semi-transparent crape robe, she made many a young man's heart glow with a strange new feeling, or burn with pangs of jealousy. And many came to the tea-house who were not thinking of the tea or scenery.

It was the rule of the monastery that none of the priests should drink saké, eat fish or meat, or even stop at the tea-houses. One young priest had rigidly kept these rules. Fish had never passed his mouth; and as for saké, he did not know even its taste. He was very studious and diligent. Every day he learned ten new Chinese characters. He had already read several of the sacred books, had made a good beginning in Sanskrit, knew the name of every one of the three thousand three hundred and thirty-three images in Kioto's most famous temples, had twice visited the sacred shrines of the Capital, and had uttered the prayer, "Glory be to the sacred lotus of the law," counting it on his rosary, five hundred thou-

sand times. For sanctity and learning he had no peer among the young neophytes of the monastery.

Alas for his piety! One day, after returning from a visit to a famous shrine, as he was passing the tea-house, he caught sight of Kiyo, and from that moment his pain of heart began. He returned to his bed of mats, but not to sleep. For days he tried to stifle his passion, but his heart only smouldered away like an incense-stick.

Before many days he made a pretext for passing that way again and again. Hopelessly in love, he stopped and entered the tea-house.

His call for refreshments was answered by Kiyo herself!

As fire kindles fire, so priest and maiden were now consumed in one flame of love. To shorten a long story, he visited the inn oftener and oftener, even stealing out at night to cross the river and spend the silent hours with his love.

So passed several months, until a change began to come over the young priest. His conscience began to trouble him for breaking his vows. In the terrible conflict between principle and passion, his soul was tossed to and fro like the feathered seed-ball of a shuttlecock. But conscience was the stronger, and won the victory. He resolved to drown his love and break off his connection with the girl. To do it suddenly would

bring grief to her and a scandal both on her family and the monastery. He must do it gradually to succeed at all.

Ah! how quickly does the sensitive love-plant know the finger-tip touch of cooling passion! Kiyo marked the ebbing tide of her lover's regard, and in her first grief and anger a terrible resolve of evil took possession of her soul. She determined to win over her lover by her importunities, and failing in this, to destroy him by sorcery.

One night she sat up until two o'clock in the morning, and then, arrayed only in a white robe, she went out to a secluded part of the mountain where in a lonely shrine stood a hideous scowling image of Fudo, who holds the sword of vengeance and sits clothed in fire. There she called upon the god to change her lover's heart or else show her how to destroy him.

Thence, with her head shaking and eyes glittering with anger like the orbs of a serpent, she hastened to the shrine of Kampira, whose servants are the long-nosed sprites, who have the power of magic and of teaching sorcery. Standing in front of the portal she saw it hung with votive tablets, locks of hair, teeth, various tokens of vows, pledges, and marks of sacrifice, which the devotees of the god had hung up. In the cold night air she asked for the power of sorcery,



that she might be able at will to transform herself into the terrible dragon-serpent whose engine coils are able to crack bones, crush rocks, melt iron, or root up trees, and which are long enough to wind round a mountain.

It would be too long to tell how this once pure and happy maiden, now turned to an avenging demon, went out nightly on the lonely mountains to practice the arts of sorcery. The mountain-sprites were her teachers, and she learned so diligently that the chief goblin at last told her she would be able, without fail, to transform herself when she wished.

The dreadful moment was soon to come. The visits of the once lover-priest gradually became fewer and fewer. They were no longer tender hours of love, but were on his part only formal interviews, while Kiyo became more importunate than ever. Tears and pleadings were alike useless, and finally one night as he was taking leave, the priest told the maid that he had paid his last visit.

Immediately the baleful fire of a serpent came into Kiyo's eyes, and the priest turned and fled across the river. He had seen the terrible gleam in the maiden's eyes, and now, terribly frightened, hid himself under the great temple bell.

Forthwith Kiyo seeing the awful moment had come, pronounced the spell of incantation taught

her by the mountain spirit, and raised her T-shaped wand. In a moment her fair head and lovely face, body, limbs, and feet lengthened out, disappeared, or became demon-like, and a fire-darting, hissing-tongued serpent, with eyes like moons trailed over the ground toward the temple, swam the river, and scenting out the track of the fugitive, entered the belfry, cracking the supporting columns made of whole tree-trunks into a mass of ruins, while the bell fell to the earth with the cowering victim inside.

Then she began winding the terrible coils round and round the metal, as with her wand of sorcery in her hands, she mounted the bell. The glistening scales, hard as iron, struck off sparks as the pressure increased. Tighter and tighter they were drawn, till the heat of the friction consumed the timbers and made the metal glow hot like fire.

Vain was the prayer of priest, or spell of rosary, as all the other bonzes piteously besought great Buddha to destroy the demon. Hotter and hotter grew the mass, until the ponderous metal ran down into a hissing pool of molten bronze; and soon, man within and serpent without, timber and tiles and ropes were nought but a few handfuls of white ashes.

## XXIII

### THE TIDE-JEWELS

**T**HE Empress of Japan, wife of the fourteenth Mikado, was named Jingu, or Godlike Exploit. She was a wise and discreet lady and assisted her husband to govern his dominions. When the Mikado marched his army against the rebels, the Empress went with him and lived in the camp. One night, as she lay asleep in her tent, she dreamed that a heavenly being appeared to her and told her of a wonderful land in the West, full of gold, silver, jewels, silks, and precious stones. The heavenly messenger told her if she would invade this country she would succeed, and all its spoil would be hers, for herself and Japan.

“Conquer Korea!” said the radiant being, as she floated away on a purple cloud.

In the morning the Empress told her husband of her dream, and advised him to set out to invade the rich land. But he paid no attention to her. When she insisted, in order to satisfy her, he climbed up a high mountain, and looking far away toward the setting sun, saw no land



thither, not even mountain peaks. So, believing that there was no country in that direction he descended, and refused to set out on the expedition. Shortly after, in a battle with the rebels the Mikado was shot dead with an arrow.

The generals and captains of the host then declared their loyalty to the Empress as the sole ruler of Japan. She, now having the power, resolved to carry out her darling plan of invading Korea. She called upon all the spirits of the mountains, rivers, and plains to give her their advice and help. Then the fairy of the mountains obeyed and gave her timber and iron for her ships; the fairy of the fields presented rice and grain for provisions; the fairy of the grasses gave her hemp for cordage. The wind-god promised to open his bag and let out his breezes to fill her sails toward Korea. All appeared except Isora, the spirit of the seashore. Again she called for him and sat up waiting all night with torches burning, invoking him to appear.

Now, Isora was a lazy fellow, always slovenly and ill-dressed, and when at last he did come, instead of appearing in state in splendid robes, he rose right out of the sea-bottom, covered with mud and slime, with shells sticking all over him and seaweed clinging to his hair. He gruffly asked what the Empress wanted.

“Go down to the Under-World and beg his

majesty, the Dragon King, to give me the two Tide-Jewels," she replied.

Now, among the treasures in the palace of the Dragon King of the World under the Sea were two Jewels having wondrous power over the ebbing and the flowing tides. They were about as large as apples, but shaped like apricots, with three rings cut near the top. They seemed to be of crystal, and glistened and shot out dazzling rays like fire. Indeed, they appeared to seethe and glow like the eye of a dragon, or the white-hot steel of the sword-forgers. One was called the Jewel of the Flood-Tide, and the other the Jewel of the Ebb-Tide. Whoever owned them had the power to make the tides instantly rise or fall at his word, to make the dry land appear, or the sea overwhelm it, in the flip of a finger.

Isora dived with a dreadful splash, down, down to the Under-World, and straightway presented himself before the Dragon King. In the name of the Empress, he begged for the two tide-jewels. The Dragon King granted his request. Producing the flaming globes from his casket, he placed them on a huge shell and handed them to Isora, who brought the Jewels to Jingu. She at once placed them in her girdle.

The Empress now prepared her fleet for the Korean invasion. Three thousand barges were built and launched. This mighty fleet sailed for

Korea in the tenth month. The hills of Japan soon began to sink below the horizon, but no sooner were they out of sight of land than a great storm arose. The ships tossed about, and began to butt each other like bulls, and it seemed as though the fleet would be driven back; when lo! the Dragon King sent shoals of huge sea-monsters and immense fishes that bore up the ships and pushed their sterns forward with their great snouts. The dragon-fishes, taking the ship's cables in their mouths towed them forward, until the storm ceased and the ocean was calm. Then they plunged downward into the sea and disappeared.

The mountains of Korea now rose into view. But the army was not to be suffered to land unmolested. Korean spies had informed their king, so that he had made ready. Along the shore were gathered the entire Korean army. Their triangular fringed banners, inscribed with dragons, flapped in the breeze. As soon as their sentinels caught sight of the Japanese fleet, the signal was given, and the Korean line of war galleys moved gaily out to attack the Japanese.

The Empress posted her archers in the bows of her ships and waited for the enemy to approach. When they were within a few hundred sword-lengths, she took from her girdle the Jewel of the Ebbing Tide and cast the flashing gem into





The dragon-fishes, taking the ship's cables in their mouths,  
towed them forward.





the sea. It blazed in the air for a moment, but no sooner did it touch the water, than instantly the ocean receded from under the Korean vessels, and left them stranded on dry land. The Koreans, thinking it was a tidal wave, and that the Japanese ships were likewise helpless in the undertow, leaped out of their galleys and rushed over the sand, and on to the attack. With shouting and drawn swords their aspect was terrible. When within range of the arrows, the Japanese bowmen opened volleys of double-headed, or triple-pronged arrows on the Koreans, and killed hundreds.

But on they rushed, until near the Japanese ships, when the Empress taking out the Flood-Tide Jewel, cast it in the sea. In the snap of a finger, the ocean rolled up into a wave many tens of feet high and engulfed the Korean army, drowning them almost to a man. Only a few were left out of the ten thousand. The warriors in their iron armor sank like lead in the boiling waves. The Japanese army landed safely, and easily conquered the country. The king of Korea surrendered and gave his bales of silk, jewels, mirrors, books, pictures, robes, tiger skins, and treasures of gold and silver to the Empress. The booty was loaded on eighty ships, and the Japanese army returned in triumph to their native country.



But the Tide-Jewels had, of course, sunk into the sea when the Empress threw them there. Isora seized them at once and returned them to his master.

Soon after her arrival at home, a son was born to the Empress Jingu, whom she named Ojin. He was one of the fairest children ever born of an imperial mother, and was very wise and wonderful even when an infant. As he grew up, he was full of the Spirit of Unconquerable Japan.

The Prime Minister was a very venerable old man, who was said to be three hundred and sixty years old. He had been the counselor of five Mikados. He was very tall, and as straight as an arrow, when other old men were bent like a bow. He served as a general in war and a civil officer in peace. For this reason he always kept on a suit of armor under his long satin and damask court robes. He wore the bear-skin shoes and the tiger-skin scabbard which were the general's badge of rank, and also the high cap and long fringed strap hanging from the belt, which marked the court noble. He had moustaches, and a long beard fell over his breast like a foaming waterfall, as white as the snows on the branches of the pine trees of Ibuki Mountain.

The Empress wished the little Ojin to live long, be wise and powerful, become a mighty warrior, be invulnerable in battle, and to have

control over the tides and the ocean as his mother once had. To do this it was necessary to get back the Tide-Jewels.

So the Prime Minister took Ojin on his shoulders, mounted the imperial war-barge, whose sails were of gold-embroidered silk, and bade his rowers put out to sea. Then standing upright on the deck, he called on the Dragon King to come up out of the deep and give back the Jewels.

At first there was no sign from the waves. The green sea lay glassy in the sunlight, and the water laughed and curled above the sides of the boat. Still the Prime Minister listened intently and waited reverently. He was not long in suspense. Looking down far under the sparkling waves, he saw the head and fiery eyes of a dragon mounting upward. Instinctively he clutched his robe with his right hand, and held Ojin tightly on his shoulder, for this time it was not Isora, but the terrible Dragon King himself who was coming.

What a great honor! The sea-king's servant, Isora, had appeared to the Empress Jingu, but the Dragon King deigned to come in person to her son!

The waters opened; the waves rolled up, curled, rolled into wreaths and hooks and drops of foam, which flecked the dark green curves with silvery bells. First appeared a living dragon with fire-

darting eyes, long flickering moustaches, glittering scales of green all ruffled, with terrible spines erect, and out of the joints of the fore-paws were curling jets of red fire. This living creature was the helmet of the Sea King. Next appeared the face of awful majesty and stern mein, as if with reluctant condescension, and then the jewel robes of the monarch. Then rose into view a huge shell, in which, on a bed of rare gems from the deep sea floor, glistened, blazed and flashed the two Jewels of the Tides.

The Dragon King spoke, saying: "Quick, take this casket. I deign not to remain long in this upper world of mortals. With these I endow the imperial prince of the Heavenly line of the Mikados of the Divine Country. He shall be invulnerable in battle. He shall have long life. To him I give power over sea and land. Of this, my promise, let these Tide-Jewels be the token."

Hardly were the words uttered when the Dragon King disappeared with a tremendous splash. The Prime Minister standing erect but breathless amid the crowd of rowers who, crouching at the boat's bottom, had not dared so much as to lift up their noses, waited a moment, and then gave the command to turn the prow to the shore.

It came about just as the sea-king had said.



Ojin grew up and became a great warrior, invincible in battle and powerful in peace. He lived to be one hundred and eleven years old, and was one of the most famous princes who ever sat upon the throne beneath the sunlit banner of Japan.

## XXIV

### THE IDOL AND THE WHALE

FROM heels to toes, man's two feet are of the same length and so for all the animal creation. One would think that in measuring metal and for taking the length of cloth, the feet on the yardstick would be alike; but no! in Japan they are not. When you go out shopping and buy cloth or soft goods, you will find the "whale measure" used. Do you go to the lumber or stone yard, or see anything hard measured, then the man pulls out his "metal foot" and marks off the length. There are two inches of difference, but why?

We must go to Kamakura to find out.

The old Buddha image that has stood out in the rain for seven hundred years could tell you, were it to open its metal lips. It is about the tallest piece of bronze in the world, with eyes of pure gold, and a great silver boss on its forehead, that looks like the full moon, and it has eight hundred big curls on its head. These are the snails that kindly coiled themselves on Buddha's

head when by thinking too much, in the hot sun of India, he might have been sunstruck.

When the great general, Yoritomo, gave peace to Japan after long wars, he laid out the city of Kamakura. To attract pilgrims to the new capital, he ordered the greatest image of Buddha in all Japan to be reared in his capital. When finished, the sitting figure rose fifty feet in the air. It was ninety-seven feet in circumference, the length of its face was eight feet, and the width from ear to ear seventeen feet, and from knee to knee it measured twelve yards. As for the thumbs, they were three feet round. Over it was built a lordly temple and the columns of camphor wood were covered with gold.

Such a colossal image quickly became the talk of people throughout the empire. Thousands of pilgrims started out to see the wonder, until the roads in summer were white with the pious folk of scrip and staff. Even the sailors on the sea chatted concerning it and the fishermen as they plied their nets, made it the subject of their talk. All agreed that the idol of Kamakura was the largest of all things in earth, air, or ocean.

Now there was a great white Whale living in the Northern Sea who prided himself on being the biggest thing in water and far ahead of any living being on the land. At first he laughed at the idea that puny men had made



an image in their own shape, that could compete with him in size. He would not believe it, but when he heard of the great pilgrimages and how the coffers of the priests were being filled with the money of the admiring visitors, he was vexed and worried. Day by day the fleets of ships multiplied on the ocean, sailing right over his head. They were loaded with people bent on seeing the golden eyes of Buddha. All the smaller whales and the fish of every fin reported to him that people were talking of nothing else. Every one praised the beauty and extolled the vastness of this greatest wonder in the Everlasting Country of Peaceful Shores.

The big Whale almost went crazy to think of being smaller than an image which men had made. Fretting and fuming, he thrashed around with his tail, making a great commotion, and rose up to the surface to blow twice as often as usual. Jealous, indignant, and angry by turns, he seemed a totally different creature from the polite whale of other days. All the fishes gave him a wide berth. Lonely and miserable, he grew thin with worry. At last, unable to sleep or to eat, he called to him the Shark and questioned him.

“Is it possible that a little man can raise a mountain of copper and make it look like himself?” asked his White Majesty.

“Well, Sire, what one man could not do, thou-

sands of them together might succeed in doing. I myself should like to see the great Buddha they are talking about."

"Go then," said the white Whale, "to the Southern Sea and find out whether this famous idol is as big as I am. Be sure to bring me a true account."

Off started the Shark, and after days and nights of swimming arrived off the shore. Alas, the great image was half a mile inland and sharks cannot walk! He swam around carefully to find some creature with wings or legs to act as his messenger to go and measure the mighty image. Espying a junk lying at anchor near the beach he swam cautiously near. It was a hot day and early in the afternoon, and every man Jack on board was sound asleep, for this was napping time. The Shark soon lost all anxiety concerning harpoons, and fear of having his flesh cut up and put on sale in the fish-shops next day. But what of his messenger?

Happily a Rat, lured out from below decks by the quiet, was running along the low bulwark. It had never been spoken kindly to before and was quite pleased when the Shark—with gentle voice, so as not to arouse the sailors—cried out, as he poked his nose out of the water, "Mr. Rat, I want you to help me. Will you do it?"

The Rat was tickled beyond measure to be thus

addressed, and wondered how he could be so useful to so big a fish. He kept back a good distance, however, for he had heard of Cat-fish and did not want to run the risk of being gobbled up. Besides he had listened to the sailors as they talked about people with a "Cat's voice," meaning those who knew how to coax, or flatter. So he was wary.

Then in a low tone the Shark told the Rat what he had come for. It was an honour to serve the lord Whale, as the biggest thing in the world, and it might save his lordship's life, or at least his health, to know the exact facts as to the size of the famous idol.

"Would Mr. Rat be so kind as to go and measure it?" he ended.

"Willingly," said the Rat, feeling highly honored to serve the lord of the ocean and his prime minister.

So, at the first opportunity, the Rat got ashore. He kept his eyes open for fear of Cats, which the Japanese call rat-killers. He ran as fast as he could to the temple which then enclosed the image. Once safely inside, he drew his breath, while thinking what next to do.

Truth to tell, the Rat was himself amazed at the size of the image. "A mountain of metal, sure enough," said he. But how should he measure so vast an object? While thinking over the



matter, the incense nearly made him sneeze. This he feared to do, lest some Puss should be about and pounce on him. Suddenly a brilliant thought struck him. He walked around the image and counting his steps, found he made five thousand paces. Then he ran back to his home on a junk, crawled down the cable close to the anchor and told the Shark all about what he had seen and gave the measurement.

Heartily thanking his four-legged friend, the Shark was off with a splash that actually woke up the sailors from their naps. One of them ran for a harpoon, but it was too late. Mr. Shark was off. Arriving in that part of the Northern Sea where the Whale was blowing, he told his story. All the reports of the idol's size were true and the circumference of its pedestal was five thousand feet.

Frantic with jealousy and unable to believe the story, the Whale determined to see for himself. Putting on his magic boots, which enabled him to travel overland, he reached the temple at Kamakura at night, when all men were abed, and knocked at the door.

"Come in," sounded the Buddha's voice like the boom of a bell.

"I cannot," groaned the Whale.

"Why not?"

"Because I am far too large."

“ Who are you? ”

“ I am the great white Whale of the Northern Sea.”

“ What do you want? ”

“ I want to see if you are bigger than I am. I cannot get into you, so please come out to me.”

Thus respectfully addressed, the idol stepped off his pedestal, and presented himself outside. The Whale was so overpowered that he trembled and knocked his head on the earth in profound respect. He now believed that what he had heard was almost true. On the other hand, the Buddha was astounded at the Whale's prodigious bulk.

By this time the chief priest and guardian of the temple was awake and up. He was nearly frightened out of his senses to find the pedestal empty. But hearing the conversation, and being invited by both the idol and the Whale to take their measure, he seized his rosary and began to measure. Each watched the other with a jealous eye, but the Whale, to his intense satisfaction, found that he was two inches longer and taller than his rival.

That settled it. Without even once thanking the idol or the priest for the trouble he had given them, he flippered off, slid into the water and was soon spouting in triumph in the great Northern Sea. The idol quietly returned to his pedestal,





The Whale found he was two inches longer.





and as for the priest, when he told his story next day, both his brethren and the people declared it must have been a dream.

Nevertheless the man in the dry-goods store and the dealer in wood and iron settled their own long standing quarrel as to what was a foot and agreed to differ. To this day the "whale foot" is two inches longer than the "metal foot."

## XXV

### THE GRATEFUL CRANE

“**F**IGHTING sparrows fear not man,” as the old proverb says. Yet it was not a sparrow but a crane that fell down out of the air. Near the feet of Musai, the farmer’s boy, it lay, as he waded in the ooze of his rice-field, working from daybreak to sundown.

The farmer’s boy was used to cranes, for in the plough’s furrow on the dry land these long-legged birds walked close behind, not the least afraid in the Mikado’s dominions. For who would hurt the white-breasted creature, that every one called the Honorable Lord Crane? The graceful birds seemed to love to be near man, when he worked in the wet or paddy-fields, where under four inches of water the seeds were planted and the rice plants grew. So graceful in all its movements is the crane, that many a dainty little maid, who acts politely, hears herself spoken of as the “bird that rises from the water without muddying the stream.”

Musai hurried to the grassy bank at the edge of the paddy-field as fast as he could wade



through the liquid mud, to see what was the matter with the crane. Throwing down his hoe, and looking in the grass, he saw that an arrow was sticking in the crane's back, and that red drops of blood dappled its white plumage. Instead of seeming frightened when the man came near, the bird bent down its neck, as if to submit to whatever the farmer's boy should do.

Gently Musai plucked out the arrow and helped the bird to rise, pushing back the undergrowth so that its broad white pinions could have free play. After a few feeble attempts to fly, it spread its wings, rose up from the earth, and after circling several times round its benefactor as though to thank him, it flew off to the mountain.

Musai went back to his work, hoping that in season his labor would yield a good crop. He had his widowed mother to support and must needs toil every day. His one delight was to come home, weary after the long hours of labor in the muddy rice-field, and have a hot bath. This his mother always had ready for him. Then, clean and with a fresh kimono, and a little rest before supper-time, he was ready for a quiet evening with the neighbors.

So in routine the days passed by until autumn was near at hand. One day, returning before the sun was fully set, he found seated beside his mother a lovely girl. In spite of his contempt-

ible appearance after a day's toil, working bare-legged in the mire, she welcomed him with the grace of a princess.

Not thinking of returning the salute, in his unwashed condition, he took off his head-kerchief, drew in his breath, and bowing to his mother asked:

"Who is the honorable That Side, and how comes she into this miserable hut?"

"My son," replied his mother, "though you are a man, you have as yet no wife. Your virtues of obedience, filial reverence, fidelity, and politeness have made you well known. Hence this fair damsel is not unwilling to become your wife. But, without your consent, I could not answer her proposal. What do you think about it?"

The young farmer, though highly complimented, at first said little, but he thought hard. "Daintily reared, and perhaps of noble birth is she, but should I gratify her desire, how can she bear the poverty to which we are accustomed? Will she be patient, when she has to suffer hunger? Or, shall we be separated, and that which promises love and happiness last only a little while, to pass away, leaving gloom and sorrow behind?"

But as the days slipped along, and when he saw how kind she was to her new mother, ever

patient and self-denying in loving reverence, all his fears were driven away like clouds before the wind. So the young man and woman were married.

But when the full autumn time came for the rice ears to fill and round out, nothing was found but husk and shell. The crop was a total failure. With heavy taxes unpaid and no food in the house, starvation loomed before them. By winter, all were in dire distress.

Then the patient wife revealed new powers and cheered her husband, saying:

“I can spin such cloth as was never made in this province, if you will build me a separate room. I cannot weave here, or make the fine pattern of red and white except when alone and in perfect silence. Build me a room, and the money you need will flow in.”

The old mother was doubtful as to her daughter-in-law's project and even Musai was but half-hearted. Yet he went to work diligently. With beam, and wattle, and thatch, floor of mats and window of latticed paper, with walls made tight because well daubed with clay, he built the room apart. There alone, day by day, secluded from all, the sweet wife toiled unseen. The mother and husband patiently waited, until after a week, the little woman rejoined the little family circle. In her hands she bore a roll of woven stuff, white



and sheeny, as lustrous and pure as fresh fallen snow. Yet here and there, a crimson thread in the stuff did but intensify the purity of the otherwise unflecked whiteness. Pure red and pure white were the only colors of this wonderful fabric.

“What shall we call it?” inquired the amazed husband.

“It has no name, for there is none other in the world like it,” said the fair weaver.

“But I must have a name. I shall take it to the Daimio. He will not buy, if he does not know how it is called.”

“Then,” said the wife, “tell him its name is ‘White Crane’s-down cloth.’”

Quickly passed the snowy fabric into the hands of the lord of the castle, who sent it as a present to the Empress in Kyoto. All were amazed by it, and the Empress commanded the donor to be richly rewarded. The farmer husband, bearing a thousand pieces of coin in his bag, hastened home to spread the shining silver at his mother’s feet and to thank the wife who had brought him fortune. A feast followed, and for many weeks the family lived easily on the money thus gained. Then, when again on the edge of need, Musai asked his wife if she were willing to weave another web of the wonderful Crane’s-down cloth.

Cheerfully she agreed, cautioning him to leave

her in privacy, and not to look upon her until she came forth with the cloth.

But alas for the spirit of prying impertinence and wicked curiosity! Not satisfied with having been delivered from starvation by a wife that served him like a slave, Musai stealthily crept up to the paper partition, touched his tongue to the latticed pane, and poked his finger noiselessly through, thus making a round hole to which he glued his eye and looked in.

What a sight! There was no woman at work, but a noble white crane—the same that he had seen in the field, and from whose back he had extracted the hunter's arrow. Bending over the spinning-wheel, the bird pulled from her own breast the silky down, and by twining and twisting made it into the finest thread which mortals ever beheld. From time to time, she pressed from her heart's blood red drops with which to dye some strands, and thus the weaving went on. Thus minute by minute the web of the cloth was nearly finished.

Musai astounded looked on without moving, until suddenly called by his mother, he cried out in response, "Yes, I'm coming."

The startled crane turned and saw the eye in the wall. Throwing down thread and web she moved angrily to the door, gave a shrill scream and flew out under the sky. Like a white speck

against the blue hills, she appeared for a little while and then was lost to sight.

Son and mother once more faced poverty and loneliness, and Musai again splashed barelegged in the rice-field.



## XXVI

### THE SWORD THAT MOWED THE GRASS

**I**N 1906, when the great Japanese general Yamagata crossed America, over the Union Pacific railway, the young newspaper men and our army officers told him about the prairies and Indians of early days.

General Yamagata was much pleased to hear these stories.

Then he told them about the "Japanese Indians," and prairies of old times, in Japan, long, long ago.

Once these "Japanese Indians," as he called them, lived all over Japan, as hunters and fishermen, in all the region around what is now Tokio and Yokohama, which was flat, grassy land, full of wild game and savage men. By and by the time came that settlers must go into the East and North land to possess the whole country for the Mikado. Then the people from the South and West would enter the new region and build houses and temples and have rice-fields and happy

homes. Then great cities would grow and ships sail the seas, so that even people in the cold North, where winters were long, could have oranges, lemons and sugar from the warm land of the South.

But these "Japanese Indians" were rough fellows, and they fought against the Mikado's men, just as the red savages did, in our colonial days, when we had no flag or president. They were the white cave men of the early ages. They had stone knives and hatchets and were very skilful in hunting bears. They did not like farmers, or strangers among them, and they gave great trouble to the emigrants who came to settle the new country. They shot poisoned arrows at the men at work in the pastures. They broke down the fences. They let the water run out of the ditches made to irrigate the fields, in which rice was planted. They burned the houses and stacks of grain and they killed the horses and oxen of the settlers. Sometimes in autumn they would set the long prairie grass on fire. In many strange ways, they made it hard for the new people.

Now when the Mikado's son, Prince Yamato, was thirty years of age, he was ordered to march with an army to subdue these Eastern savages. The Emperor gave his son a spear that was of eight arms' length. This was much like our pre-

senting a flag to the color sergeant of a regiment of soldiers. Along with Prince Yamato went his dear wife, the Princess Orange Blossom, for she was brave and was never afraid.

On his way toward the Rising Sun, Prince Yamato stopped at a temple, in which his aunt was a priestess. Here was laid up, as a great treasure, a famous sword of keenest edge and finest temper. This she brought out and gave to her nephew, together with a bag full of flints; for there were no matches in those days and flint and steel were used to strike fire and light candles.

So into the far Eastern region, where were few Japanese people, but many of the savage people called Ainu, who have eyes and noses and beards like white men, the Prince and his army marched. They passed through Owari, where is now the great City of the Long House. It has a famous castle, on the top of the corners of which were the golden dolphins, many feet high, with scales of shining gold.

Soon they came to the glorious Matchless Mountain of Fujiyama, rising with its crown of snow far up to the blue sky and its majestic form casting a shadow at sunset many miles long and far over the sea.

Then climbing over the lovely Hakoné mountains, to which young folks now go for their picnics and to which many people in summer from



the cities come, they saw lying before them the great grassy plains that lie around the Bay of Yedo.

When they came down the mountain to the flat land, the deer were so plentiful that Yamato made a plan to hunt them with some of his men and get plenty of venison. So, with their bows and arrows, they rode into the high grass, which came up to the horses' breasts and even to the saddles.

They did not know that thousands of the Ainu were hiding in the grass and behind logs and bushes; for when the Ainu went to war and fought their battles, they were just like the American Indians. It was hard for the soldiers even to see their foes, that lay in ambush and attacked them.

When the Ainu savages had seen the strangers coming, they were very glad to find these were going to hunt deer and would thus be scattered. So their chief called together his fighting men, and said to them:

"Come on and spread yourselves all around and set fire to the grass on three sides and, most of all, where the wind is blowing. We'll burn up these proud fellows and drive them away. Then, the whole army in retreat will march back and leave us and our country to ourselves."

So when the hunters were well scattered, the

Ainu set fire to the tall grass and the wind blowing fiercely, the Prince and his party soon found themselves in a cloud of smoke. This so filled their eyes, that they could not see anything and might be burned alive. Already they felt the fierce heat. For a few moments, they were at their wit's end to know what to do.

Should they fail and leave only their blackened corpses lying in the new land?

Not so, thought the Prince, who remembered the bag of flints, which his wise aunt had given him. Drawing this bag from his girdle, he first called his men together and then bade them scatter and strike fire with the flints on the backs of their swords. To each man he gave a little ball of tinder, telling him to set fire to the grass near him and then turn his back to the wind and smoke.

Quickly the Mikado's soldiers plied their tasks and soon the flames of the big fire rolled away from them. Yet behind them, the sheets of fire and smoke, which the Ainu had kindled, were coming nearer and nearer, and threatened to burn and choke them.

Seeing this, Yamato drew his sharp sword and swinging it round about him as if it were a scythe, he cut another great space, while his men threw the bundles of grass away from them into the burned space they had made.

Their lives were saved! Wonderful to tell, the wind after a while changed its direction and burned up many of the savages themselves, before they could escape.

So Prince Yamato gained a famous victory over the cave men of the savage region. In time, other generals extended the reign of the Mikado toward the pole star.

Because of Prince Yamato's conquest, the Mikado's realm became known as The Land of the Rising Sun—for that is what the name Japan means.

In our day, when we travel across the country, from the Pacific Ocean to the Sea of Japan in a palace car, we pass a station with the sign "Yaidzu," which is named after the famous prairie battle in the grass, when a sword became a scythe and was used as a mower.



## XXVII

### PRINCE YAMATO'S ADVENTURES

**D**URING all the journeys of Prince Yamato, his wife, the Princess Orange Blossom, was with her husband. She proudly carried his sword for him when traveling and handed it to him when he rode off to battle with the savages.

When the Prince and his army arrived at the Bay of Yedo, his men hastily made light boats with sails and rudders. The Prince was in a great hurry to get across the bay, into the land beyond and win more victories over the Ainu savages.

His men, fearing a storm, thought it a hard matter to cross the bay, but Prince Yamato was so filled with the pride of his victory, that he scoffed at the idea of the bay's being too big or wide and of any trouble in crossing. For indeed the water looked very calm and as level as a mirror. So he jeered at the workmen and cried out:

“This is no ocean, but only a creek. I could jump over it if I tried to.”

When Riu Jin, the Dragon King of the World Under the Sea heard this, he became very angry and he said to his dragons:

“This proud fellow, a mere mortal, thinks I have no power over my waters. He has insulted me and I’ll show him his folly.”

So Riu Jin gave orders to his rain dragons to rise up into the clouds and make them pour down a flood of water from the skies.

To the storm dragons he said, “Go up to the surface of the water and with all your might lash the bay with your scaly tails until the waves rise like high hills. I’ll punish the proud invader of my realm, even if he is a prince, and do you watch, to see if he repents. Only when he offers me a victim, do you make the storm cease.” Then, looking at both armies of his dragons, of rain and of the storm waves, he waved his hand as a signal to go.

When the hundreds of boats of Yamato’s army started from the shore to go across the bay, there was blue sky and a shining sun and scarcely a ripple. But when hardly half-way across, the heavens became black. A deluge of rain water fell from the clouds, and the rising waves seemed as if they would wash all on board into the deep.

In vain they lowered sail, took to the oars and by rudder tried to steer the boats in such a way as to meet the waves and break their force, or go

through them. All faces were pale and the stoutest hearts became cold, for they feared greatly because of the sea-god's wrath.

Then the bravest woman in the empire, the Princess Orange Blossom, stood forth on the edge of the Prince's ship and cried out:

"All this storm has come because Riu Jin has felt himself insulted. I shall leap into the waves to calm his wrath. Farewell, my dear husband!" Then she prayed to the Dragon King to bring her husband, the Prince, and his army safely to the opposite shore.

Her prayers said, she leaped into the boiling billows. Within five minutes a great calm fell on the whole scene. The waves sank to water level. The wind ceased and from the blue sky the sun shone out again, and white birds came sailing through the air. Prince Yamato landed with his army and subdued the Ainu savages. They all promised to obey the Mikado, and become Japanese.

So having done what his imperial father had given him orders to do, Prince Yamato began his homeward march to the West. This time, in order to get back to Kyoto, he did not take the low and flat Eastern Road, over which he had come, but went further north over the Middle Mountain Road.

This rough path, through the high lands of



Japan, was in those days little more than a trail. Moreover it was full of dangers in the form of bad fairies, terribly large serpents, wild beasts and creatures with poisonous breath. Yet on he went, Yamato and his men. They climbed the steep Usui pass and when at the top the Prince looked back. Seeing the great wide plain, with prairie after prairie stretching to the sea, and the blue waters of the shining Bay of Yedo, he thought of his dear wife, the Princess Orange Blossom, who made herself a victim to the Dragon King's wrath, in order to save him, her husband.

His feelings of sorrow overcame him and he sighed, "Adzuma! adzuma!" which means "Alas, alas, my wife, my wife!"

This word became the name of the new country in Mikado land. To this day Eastern Japan is called in poetry Adzuma, and this is also the name of a war vessel, Japan's first iron-clad.

Prince Yamato and his little army turned their faces to the West and went on over the mountains, then so covered with forests, that the path was hard to find; but after many adventures and much toil they reached the plain along the sea. There, in one village, he saw signs of mourning and heard many people weeping.

Calling the head men of the village before him, he asked them "What is the matter? What is

the meaning of these signs of grief? Can I help you?" he asked.

Then they told him of a terrible monster, half snake and half dragon, with breath that poisoned the people that came down from its mountain lair and seized the virgins and dragged them off to eat them up. It killed the men and terrified the women, so that all the people were afraid, even to slide open their doors, to go out to plant rice, or get water whether they wanted it either to drink or to wash clothes with.

At this, the Prince Yamato's wrath rose and was hot. At once he set out to the hilltop where the snaky monster's lair was. He had no wife now to hand him his trusty sword. In fact, he went out unarmed, with no weapon of any kind in his hand.

The climbing was so steep that he was nearly out of breath when he reached the hilltop. Then there suddenly appeared in his path a frightful serpent, with its wide mouth open and its red fangs darting forward.

But before the beast had time to coil and spring, the Prince seized the monstrous serpent by the throat and strangled it, until it lay dead at his feet.

But the great serpent's breath had so poisoned the air that, like a heavy mist, it hung over the hills; so that half blinded and dizzy, Prince

Yamato had to grope his way down, but when once on the plain, a wind blew away the fog and cloud. After a while, the sun shining clearly, he felt himself revived again.

But soon again, the pains came upon him and he fell down fainting among his men. He could not walk. So they carried him back to the healing hot springs, which to this day make thousands of sick folks well again.

After some weeks he was able to stand on his feet and to walk once more. So he reached the sacred shrine, which, to this day, when one looks out of the car window, on the left hand side, when traveling from Tokio, he sees peeping out of a grove of trees. There he met again his aunt, the priestess, who had given him the bag of flints, when traveling to the East.

The priestess sallied forth with her maidens to welcome Prince Yamato, and there, on reaching the shrine, he laid up the famous victory sword, naming it Grass Mower.

Even in our day, after more than a thousand years, this sword, with the sacred mirror, that was given by the Sun Goddess, and the crystal sphere, is among the three precious treasures which form the Imperial regalia of Everlasting Great Japan. These are like the crown jewels of old Europe, when there were many kings and emperors.



And how did Prince Yamato die, and where is his family buried?

Ah, now we tell the most beautiful part of our story, even as it was told in ancient times.

When, worn out with his toils, in exploring and subduing a new country for the Mikado, he passed away, his spirit took the form of a white bird and flew away toward the sky. So to-day, when boys and girls in Japan see the graceful snow-white crane, flying from hill to hill and mound to mound, no one harms these lovely creatures. They seem like snowflakes on the landscape, which in Japan is ever clothed with living green. All the good boys hope to be as brave as Prince Yamato, and the girls pray to be as noble and unselfish as his wife, Princess Orange Blossom.

## XXVIII

### THE GIFT OF GOLD LACQUER

**A** THOUSAND years ago the Great Buddha's gospel came to Japan to make the rough people gentle and the cruel kind. Human beings at once began to care for animals. The nobles and common folks alike were glad to hear the good news and learn how to help one another and the dumb brutes.

The Empress ordered that a pagoda should be built in every province and a temple in every village. So happy was every one to see arising in his village so grand a building, that even the boys and girls helped in the work. Some carried stones and wood, others brought clay and plaster. Even the ladies cut off their long black hair and had it made into ropes to haul the materials. The big tree trunks cut in the forest were drawn to the carpenters, who smoothed and shaped them into temple columns.

Soon, in many a village, tall and stately edifices rose high above the thatched cottages of the humble folks. The long sloping roof, instead of being covered with rice straw, was handsomely

shingled and the new timber gave out a sweet smell. When the ridge pole was put up the builders set a bow and arrow at each end hoping to shoot and kill any demons that should come near, but they were most afraid of fire that might burn down the building and thus make all their work come to naught. So at the end of the gable they fixed the great devil's tile on which were moulded figures of the water weed to put out the flames. To guard against sparks that might fly from the chimneys of houses near by, they planted rows of tall trees to act as a wall of defense. Thus they hoped to keep lord Buddha's temple standing for a thousand years.

Then the men that could carve and paint and work metal came up from the capital city to make the inside glorious to behold. Soon the lights and the incense, the shining brass, the burning candles and brilliant altar furniture, the lofty columns made of whole camphor trees, the ceiling of grained wood, the silken rolls of writing on the reading desk, the intoning of the sacred books and the chanting of the priests who were dressed in silk robes, made a splendid sight and a charming sound.

"Isn't it delightful!" said one wrinkled old granny. "I feel quite young again, for I can see and hear and smell as never before."

"Yes, such music and sweet odors and such



glory to look upon, I never expected to see," said her daughter, who was a mother and had brought her boy Toko with her.

As for the temple itself, it was full of grown people and children, admiring everything. They felt grateful for the good doctrine taught by the learned priests, some of whom had traveled across the sea from Korea. The first sermon of the bonze was on being kind to all creatures. It was our duty, said he, to love even the worms, and the crickets.

All the beasts of the field and the birds of the air also rejoiced that Buddha's doctrine had come to the Mikado's realm, for now human beings were kinder than ever to their dumb friends with wings or on four feet. Even during the winter, no bird froze or deer starved. Farmers were patient, even with the monkeys that were so numerous as to be mischievous. In the field the white heron could walk unfrightened in the furrows behind the plowman, picking up its food joyfully.

These simple folk were easily pleased, for as yet there was no gilding, or varnish, or fine art, but only plain wood and metal. There was no gold leaf or shining vermilion or violet lacquer yet. Rough and rude enough, the sacred building might seem to a traveler, for it could not compare for a moment with gorgeous temples in

India, the gilded ceilings of Korea, or the porcelain pagodas of China.

Happy though they were, yet every one of the villagers wondered how they could make their temple still more lovely. Some even dreamed at night of the far-off pagodas, of which their bonze told them. One farmer, who was very kind to the cranes and who carefully refrained from ever killing even an insect, was especially eager to transfer the sheen of the beetles and the gloss of feathers to common wood, and long he pondered on how to do it. He would have the brilliancy of the dragon-fly cover up the knot marks, and the metallic lustre of the pheasant's wings to overlay plain pine. But how to compass the mystery filled him with care.

One night weary with his work in the rice-field, as he slept, a beautiful white bird with black tips on its wing feathers appeared to him and talked about making the temple tables and altars glossy and rich in color.

"I am the spirit of the lacquer tree that grows in the deep forest. I poison the men that wound me. My trunk has a milk-white sap. Tap it and stir up the juice in a wooden vessel. As soon as it becomes thick, apply it to wood. Then the temple columns will shine like jet. Be wise, and don't laugh when I tell you a secret. It must dry in a wet atmosphere. Guard yourself,

for there is danger. Put not your hands in the liquid. Persevere. Be clean. Farewell!"

The farmer woke up and wondered what all this meant, but tired and sleepy, his eyes were soon closed again. Not till the raven croaked to tell the sun was risen, did he wake up again. Then remembering the vision, he sallied forth axe in hand with his boy who carried a pail into the forest. Coming to a tree he gave it a blow and out trickled a white juice. It made his nose and eyes tingle, but collecting a pint or so of the stuff, he took it home, and, after agitating it in a platter, left it quiet over night.

The next morning everybody in the house was growling. Noses, eyes and lips smarted. What was the cause? The now dark fluid was not yet suspected. Another night and their mouths and eyelids felt as if hornets had stung them. On the third day, with their eyes nearly closed, they fumbled about like blind folks. For the first time, they suspected the tree juice, now very black and ugly, and were tempted to throw it away. Nevertheless, though suffering, the farmer lad and father kept their temper and were kinder than ever to the birds in the field.

At night in his dreams the spirit of the tree, in the form of a white crane, again appeared to the farmer.

"Try again and be not discouraged. For



your faithfulness in keeping the tree juice, even when you were poisoned, I shall reveal to you another secret, even that of colors and to your son that of gold. This art shall not be born in the fire, like that of the clay which makes cup and vase. I shall show you what water can do. Go forth again. Have more patience."

They obeyed, and this time the father brought also his fair daughter. Behold the three, armed with axe, sap-spout and bucket, going forth among the bamboo and into the forest. Selecting a fat trunk, the trio ranged themselves in line a few yards apart. Then praying first to the spirit of the tree, and begging pardon for wounding its body, the man ran forward and gave a resounding whack which seemed to stun the tree and make it weep. Drops fell like tears. At the same moment there rose out of the top branches the same white crane which he had seen in his dream.

The memory of the stinging poisonous sap made the boy hesitate to rush forward and insert the spout, so that the sap should not be wasted. As if to encourage the lad, the crane flew down lower and lower and then in circles round the boy's head. So plucking up courage, he dashed up and squeezed the spout into the gaping wound made by the axe. Nearly blinded by the acrid fumes, father and son remained at a distance and

in safety waited to see the girl trip forth bravely with the bucket.

Only one circling of the encouraging crane around the maiden's head was necessary to give her nerve. In a moment, into the vessel, which she placed on the ground, the white sap fell. Drip, drip, like milk it issued until the bucket was nearly full, but she and her father and brother kept at a distance.

They waited at home until the stars were out and gone again before approaching the tree again to bring in the twenty-four hours' yield.

"Let us this morning make ourselves pure by cleansing ourselves carefully," said the father, "as the tree spirit said." Fresh from the bath and in clean clothes they sallied forth and brought home their prize.

Night after night the feather-robed spirit of the tree spoke to both father and son in vision, each time commending their faithfulness. Slowly, day by day, the soreness and poisonous effect of the fresh juice, now made into shining lacquer, passed off. They learned to apply it skilfully, clothing common wood with a hard glossy armor. Their wooden bowls, set to dry on shelves sopped with a wet cloth, became like glazed porcelain and their little breakfast table like enamel. Yet the mystery of gloss was not gained in fire but by water. With each opening

of the morning glory, the elder gained fresh patience and the younger more skill. Neither heat nor cold, salt nor sour hurt lacquer, and common wood seemed like metal. Out of paper covered with this hard varnish laid on in many coats the warriors made coats as tough as iron.

It was now the boy's turn in his dreams to be told fresh secrets from the crane. He learned to mix the varnish with many colors. When he laid away his work in moisture the lustre became dazzlingly brilliant. One day adding gold leaf, he found the noble mixture made extraordinary beauty. So still keeping his secret he traveled to Nara, the capital, and learned drawing and painting from the Korean artists.

Toko now become a decorator of temples and a maker of altar furniture. He fashioned writing boxes for poetry parties and desks for the learned monks. On a cabinet of drawers for his mother he drew and finished in gold lacquer a picture of his native village and the fields and hills toward the west. The fame of his skill reached the ears of the Emperor, who invited him to make a splendid picnic box, for which he paid him a thousand rolls of silk. A tray for the Empress was the wonder of all in the palace. With gold leaf and lacquer the village temple now looked like an Imperial shrine. Pilgrims traveled from all over the empire to admire its



splendor and take back home stories of a beauty they had never dreamed of before.

Yet all this time, even when the golden wind-bells, tinkling in the mouths of the phoenixes that hung along the temple eaves, seemed to sing his fame in the evening breezes, did not the artist forget the tree spirit that first told him to be pure and to persevere. But one night in a dream, when sleeping under the old home roof, the silvery white crane again appeared to him, yet this time silent, with no message.

“Speak,” said the once farmer lad, now a great master, who had many pupils in art. “How can I express my grateful heart for your kindness to me? I have fame, honor, and wealth, besides the joy of serving the lord Buddha in making his temples beautiful, and the Emperor’s palace glorious, besides caring for my old father and mother. What may I do for thee, my guardian spirit?”

“Lord Buddha will ever incline the children of Japan to treat gently the snowy heron and the silk-white cranes forever; but do you and your successors, on the panel, the tray, the screen, and the writing box make the crane and heron comrades of the gold-lacquered mountains and trees, the landscape and the rice-fields. Let them preen their feathers, or soar in the air, or bask in the red disk of the morning sun, or amid

the curling spray of the ocean disport themselves in joy. Thus let all the world, for a whole banzai, or a thousand generations, be grateful for the gift of the lacquer tree."

And to this day it is appointed that dull clay can win a glistening robe only in the kiln while the tree juice finds its body in moisture. Shining gold and brilliant colors rise out of the fire, while lacquer owes its richest lustre to the mystery of water. Even yet, alike on the landscape warmed by the sun and on the picture wrought by the artist, the snowy heron steps daintily and the white crane flies to the mountain. So shall it ever be in Everlasting Great Japan.





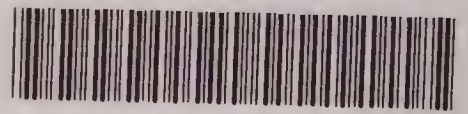




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